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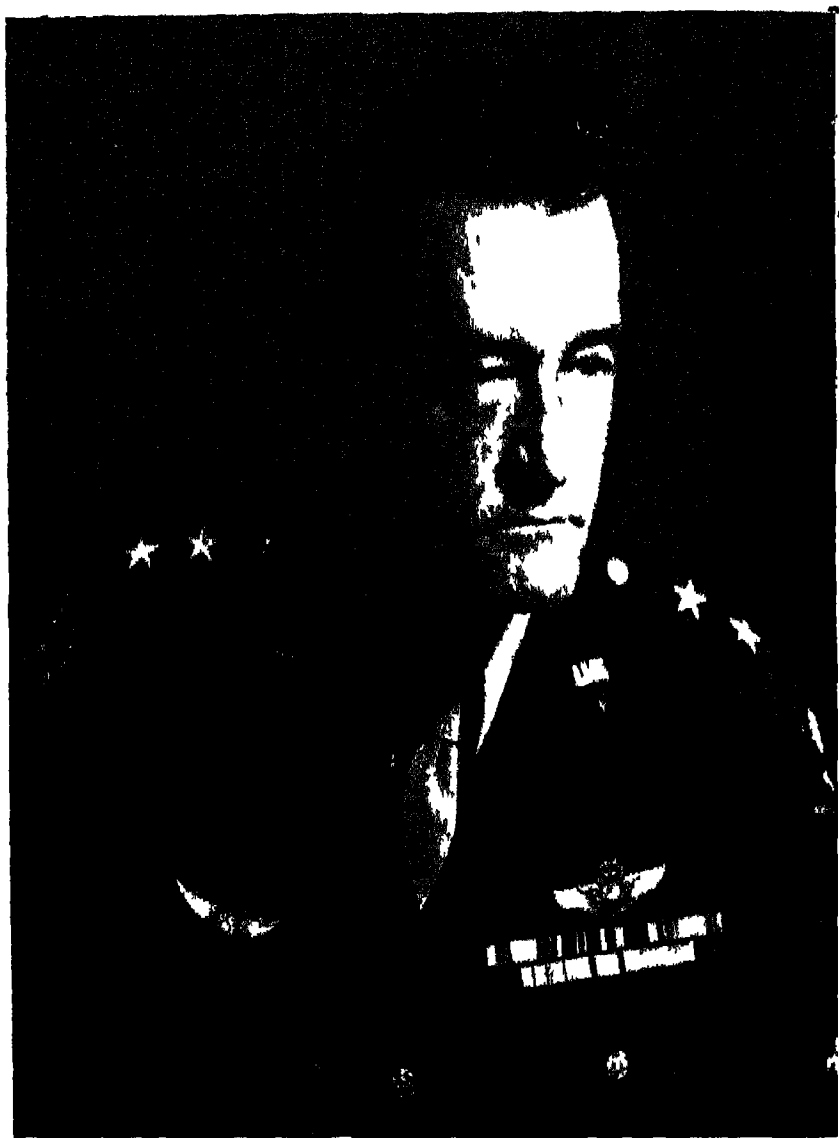
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## ·WAY OF A FIGHTER





# WAY OF A FIGHTER

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The Memoirs of  
CLAIRE LEE CHENNAULT

MAJOR GENERAL, U.S. ARMY (Ret.)

Edited by Robert Hotz

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, NEW YORK

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# Foreword

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THE United States is losing the Pacific war.

Three years after V-J day this country is facing the loss of everything it won during the four bloody years it took to defeat Japan.

Here are the facts:

General George C. Marshall told Congress in the spring of 1948 that if Manchuria were lost to the Chinese Communists, the United States position in southern Korea would be untenable.

Manchuria has been lost to the Chinese Communists.

General Marshall also told Congress that if the Chinese Communists controlled North China the United States position in Japan would be "extremely serious."

North China has been lost to the Chinese Communists.

General Douglas MacArthur warned the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the fall of 1948 that if the Chinese Communists take the lower Yangtze Valley and Shanghai the American military bastion on Okinawa will be outflanked and his position in Japan will be as exposed and untenable as it was in the Philippines during 1941.

As this is written, the Chinese Communists are fighting toward the Yangtze at Nanking. They are aiming to force a Yangtze crossing and sweep to Shanghai.

A complete Communist victory in China will channelize the undercurrents of native unrest already swirling through Burma, India, Malaya, and Indonesia into another rising tide of Communist victories. The ring of Red bases can be stretched from Siberia to Saigon. Then the stage will be set for the unannounced explosion of World War III.

I have completed a decade of observing and administering American policy in Asia. I am convinced that this policy is plunging us into a disastrous repetition of the errors that dragged us into World War II. I can hear the time fuse of a third world war sputtering in China as

it burns toward the final powder keg, and I cannot stand idly by without making every effort in my power to snuff it out.

It was not an easy decision for me to publish this book. I have had my share of heartbreaks and have always felt it best to keep my peace. I have no taste for muckraking as a pastime, and I believe it is important for a people to have confidence in its leaders.

However, it is axiomatic that in periods of crisis a nation must have the very best of its leadership if it is to survive. The last war seared Russia to its heart. In the bloody catastrophes of the early war years the Russian leadership was pared to the hard, competent core that engineered Soviet survival. It is leadership of the very best the Russians can offer that we face today.

I am not so sure the United States has shaken down to its very best leadership. Even now the lingering fog of wartime military censorship obscures the sharp edge of disaster on which we teetered in the spring of 1942 when Japan swept the southern seas. In the flush of final military victory it was only human to forget the lessons of the mistakes that led us into jeopardy. In the relief of the slaughter's end it is all too easy to weary of the battle to keep the peace that follows every war.

Many of the things in this book have been set down with genuine regret. I realize that much written here may be painful for some of the personalities discussed and that the counter criticism that is sure to come may be personally distasteful to me. But I can remain silent no longer. The stakes are now too high. I must take the long chance that by offering my evidence on the last decade in the Orient I may contribute something to an accurate estimate of the problems we now face and the direction in which we are drifting. Nothing less than our national survival depends on how well we understand this drift and navigate a new course.

China is the key to the Pacific. Politics are variable, but geography is a constant. It is the geography of China that makes that unhappy land so important. Whatever sentimental appeal there may be in the American aid for China, the United States attitude toward China should be based on a thoroughly realistic appraisal of China's value to the United States.

This country is now engaged in a worldwide struggle with Russia over organization of the world. The problem is whether war with Russia is inevitable or whether the world can be organized as a co-operative venture in peace. This decision depends entirely on the shifting balance of strength between the positions of the United States and Russia.

There is a growing accumulation of intelligence to indicate that Soviet leaders already consider their Asiatic victories of sufficient strategic importance to tip the world balance of power decisively in favor of Russia.

The Russians understand the role of China in this balance well. Since the beginning of the Chinese Revolution in the early 1920's Russians have been active in bending China to their purpose. After they lost their first chance to gain control of China in 1927, the Soviet leaders vigorously aided any cause that might weaken the Japanese program to hitch China to its imperialistic chariot. Now, with Japan defeated, Russia is again shrewdly exploiting the weakness of American policy in China to make her most determined bid for domination of that vast, strategic area.

The Russians seem to learn something from history. They have watched their German neighbors go down to shattering defeat twice in a two-front war. There is considerable evidence that the Soviet leaders are determined to avoid that pitfall. While Germany was a prewar menace on the western flank, Russia carefully avoided war with Japan despite ample provocation by the Japanese. Pitched battles using airplanes and tanks were fought on the Manchurian frontier in 1932 and 1936 between the Russians and Japanese, but the Russians refused to be baited into a full-scale war. Russia was also wary of taking on even a badly mauled Japan in 1945 until the Soviet victory over Germany was complete.

I seriously question that Russia will make anything more than probing skirmishes in Europe until her Asiatic flank is secure. The flurries of Russian activity in Europe are largely tests of American policy and smoke screens to divert attention from the fact that Russia is acquiring vast natural resources, strategic bases, and securing its most vulnerable flank in the Orient.

The Russians are well aware, even if most Americans are not, of the strategic implications of China. North China and Manchuria were the industrial bases that furnished more than one third of all Japanese war production. From air bases built for the Americans during the last war at Chengtu, Sian, and Lanchow in northwest China, all of the vast Russian industry east of the Ural Mountains is open to air attack. From these same bases and dozens of others in North China the slender thread of Russian communications between eastern and western Siberia could be snapped by even a small air force. With North China controlled by a government friendly to the United States, Russia's only access to these fields would be across a thousand miles



of Turkestan desert. As a result of the Communist sweep in China many of these vital fields are already in the hands of Chinese Communists. From Okinawa, Japan, and the Philippines, American airpower can only peck away at the perimeter of Russia's vitals. From North and central China the same force could strike deeply into Russia's industrial heart.

These, then, are the stakes for which we are playing in China. If China remains friendly to the United States, the Russians will dare not move deeper into Europe leaving their vitals exposed on the Asiatic flank. If the Asiatic flank is secured and American airpower is pushed out beyond a critical range, then the way will be open for new and more powerful ventures in Europe.

It is now obvious that the United States played its prewar hand in Asia badly. Initial Japanese aggression in Manchuria during 1931 and 1932 was the tip-off to the potential aggressors that the world would not be organized on a basis of collective security. It showed clearly that the Western powers would not stick together to keep the peace. It is the answer to precisely this same question that the Russians are probing for today. On this answer will depend their future plans. Our record in China so far has provided them with the same answer as in 1931. If our China policy continues along its present course the Russians will probably be justified in concluding that our determination to preserve the peace is no stronger now than that of the Western nations in 1931-32. In that case, their decision will favor further aggression that can only lead to war.

After Japanese attacks on China in 1937 the United States failed to enforce its "Open Door Policy" in China and allowed Japan to exclude us from the Yangtze and China's coastal ports. At the same time the United States sold enormous quantities of scrap iron, oil, and aviation supplies to Japan. We were awakened from that fool's dream one Sunday morning by the sound of Japanese bombs blasting Pearl Harbor.

Our wartime policy in China failed to retrieve our prewar losses. Primarily because of the leadership of General Joseph W. Stilwell, we failed to achieve either the military or the political objectives desired in China. Not until Stilwell was succeeded by Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer did American policy in China bear any resemblance to that of two allies fighting a common foe.

Immediately after the war Wedemeyer continued to execute a firm and constructive policy. Already he had regained much of the ground lost by Stilwell and had promising prospects of complete success. Collapse of Japan found the Generalissimo's armies still in South and

West China far from the vital ports and industrial centers held by the Japanese. Chinese Communist armies, in contrast, lay along the lower Yangtze Valley and near all the major centers of North China. But in this race to relieve the Japanese, the United States provided air lift that enabled the Generalissimo's armies to leapfrog Communist forces in their path and occupy the key cities. Navy transports later moved other Chinese divisions to Manchurian ports to begin occupation of the vital area.

To his everlasting credit, Wedemeyer diagnosed the situation accurately and acted with promptness and decision to avert this initial Communist crisis and prevent the Chinese Communists from taking over control of China's key areas from the Japanese. Later Wedemeyer made a thorough study of China's postwar problems and blueprinted a detailed plan for the type and quantity of American aid required to help the Chinese effectively reorganize their shattered country. The recommendations of this report were not only ignored but the report itself was ruthlessly suppressed, and the American people and their Congress have been deprived of the testimony of a man who is perhaps our best authority on postwar China. Even at this late date the Wedemeyer report on China should be made public.

After a summer of diplomatic maneuvering between the Generalissimo and Chinese Communist leaders, the civil war broke out into the open again in October 1945. The Generalissimo's armies still had their American-supplied equipment. Well equipped with trucks, artillery, machine guns, and mortars they began a systematic mop up of Communist troops wherever they could be found. The Generalissimo's offensive was well under way and progressing successfully when General George C. Marshall reached China in November 1945 as a special emissary. Marshall has now retired in poor health after devoting a lifetime of great service to his country. He carries with him the respect of all those, including myself, who worked with him during the war and of all who shared his labors during the trying postwar years.

It was unfortunate that his assignment in China was to carry out a policy set for him by the State Department that was utterly impossible to execute. The failure of Marshall's China mission had its roots in these faulty orders. Under normal circumstances it would seem less than fair not to ignore this episode in the career of a man who has done so much for his country. However, a full discussion of this period in our China policy is absolutely essential to understand what is going on in Asia and why our national survival is at stake. Here in Shanghai, with China crumbling before my eyes, I have no choice but to discuss the Marshall mission frankly.

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Marshall was a rigidly disciplined "spit and polish" soldier of the "Black Jack" Pershing school, and he came to China fresh from five years as the head of the most powerful military organization in the world. Marshall was used to conducting his business through direct orders promptly executed without question. By the time Marshall reached China that country was reduced to a state of disorganization where getting things accomplished by the Chinese government required rare tact, flexibility, and judgment. Only four years of a far less brutal enemy occupation reduced France to a position where it is still impossible to organize a responsible government. China suffered eight years of occupation interlarded with intermittent civil war that left economic chaos and political turbulence so violent it was impossible for an Occidental to understand it at first glance. Marshall's judgment of China by his strict soldier's standards and tight concept of organization could hardly have aided his understanding of the Chinese problems he came to solve.

Marshall also came to China with a set of orders utterly impossible to carry out. They were given to him by a State Department that was the source of a Russian policy now admitted to have been a grievous error. Marshall did not originate that policy, and, when he became Secretary of State, he was the leader in the fight to change it. However, in his China mission he was saddled with these State Department orders; good soldier that he was, he strove to carry them out to the letter despite all obstacles and regardless of how hopeless he himself may have thought the task set for him.

Marshall's orders were to bring an end to the Chinese civil war and stimulate a coalition government in China by taking the Chinese Communists into the existing government headed by the Generalissimo. These orders were the product of the Yalta-Potsdam political climate that based American policy on the assumption that it was both possible and necessary to co-operate with the Russians. During the period when this utterly mistaken notion guided American policy it was China that suffered the most serious consequences.

To guide him in this complex and difficult role, Marshall had the conflicting testimony of two of his close personal friends—Stilwell and Wedemeyer. Unfortunately, he accepted Stilwell's version of China and Chinese leadership almost at face value. This could not help but complicate his task.

Net result of Marshall's fifteen-month mission to China was much the same as Stilwell's earlier experience. The trend of a gradually stronger Central Government was reversed and the military balance shifted again in favor of the Chinese Communists.

Stripped to its essentials, here is what the Marshall mission did to China. It forced a truce to the Chinese civil war at a time when the Central Government forces were winning. When the Generalissimo naturally balked at endorsing a policy that meant military disaster for his forces, Marshall applied pressure in the Stilwell manner by shutting off the flow of all American military aid to China including war surplus bought and paid for by the Chinese. This arms embargo lasted for nearly a year. He also summarily scuttled a Sino-American agreement made in September 1945 whereby the United States agreed to supply China with planes and equipment for an eight and one-third group air force including four-engine bombers. Marshall also extracted a promise from the Generalissimo not to use the Chinese Air Force already in China against the Communists on the grounds that this would constitute "offensive action." Restricting the Chinese Air Force deprived the Generalissimo of his most potent weapon. It was also implied that discussions regarding a \$500,000,000 loan to China could not be resumed until a truce was effected in the civil war. Marshall did not know then that the most effective Washington opposition to the Chinese loan was coming from Henry Wallace, a man whose position on Russia has since become quite clear.

The truce sponsored and pushed by Marshall, with all the diplomatic resources of the United States at his disposal, forced the Generalissimo to halt his anti-Communist offensive at a time when it was on the verge of wiping out large bodies of Chinese Communist troops. Some fifty truce teams each were dispatched to trouble spots all over China. Each was headed by an elderly American colonel specially picked for his white hair to impress the Chinese. Here are some specific examples of what they accomplished.

North of Hankow some 200,000 government troops had surrounded 70,000 Communist troops and were beginning a methodical job of extermination. The Communists appealed to Marshall on the basis of his truce proposal, and arrangements were made for the fighting to cease while the Communists marched out of the trap and on to Shantung Province, where a large Communist offensive began about a year later. On the East River near Canton some 100,000 Communist troops were trapped by government forces. The truce teams effected their release and allowed the Communists to march unmolested to Bias Bay where they boarded junks and sailed to Shantung.

The worst fiasco was at Kalgan Pass. This gap in the North China Mountains is a historic gateway between China and Manchuria. At the end of the war there were no organized Communists in Manchuria.

Chinese Communists flocked from their base in northwest China through the Kalgan Pass to join the Russian troops in Manchuria. When the Chinese government troops occupied Manchuria they found the great industrial centers stripped bare of machinery and the tremendous arsenals of the famed Japanese Kwantung Army empty. There was no trace of either the Kwantung Army or its equipment.

Early in 1946 a government offensive captured Kalgan and sealed off the pass, trapping nearly a million Chinese Communists in northwest China who were moving toward Manchuria. The Communists complained that they were merely returning to their prewar homes in Manchuria. Marshall made strenuous efforts to get the Generalissimo to open the Kalgan Pass for these Communists. Eventually the Generalissimo yielded, withdrew his troops in June 1946, and the Communist horde poured into Manchuria. The Communists then broke the truce by fortifying Kalgan Pass. A year later Chinese government armies had to fight a bloody campaign to recapture the pass they voluntarily evacuated under the truce.

In January 1947 the mystery of what happened to the Japanese Kwantung Army equipment was solved. The poorly armed Chinese Communists who marched north the year before now swarmed south from Manchuria armed with Japanese rifles, machine guns, mortars, tanks, and artillery. They even had Japanese aircraft but no gas or pilots to operate them. The Russians had simply turned over the Japanese equipment to the Chinese Communists and thus endowed them with a rich military legacy.

Conservative estimates of the Japanese military stockpile in Manchuria seized by the Russians appraise it as sufficient matériel to supply a million men for ten years of fighting. By using Japanese munitions the Russians avoided the necessity of investing their own resources and are able to claim that no Russian arms were sent to China. The Manchurian booty represents the total investment the Russians can afford in China at present. They lack the industry in eastern Siberia to supply a sustained war effort even for themselves. Transportation facilities across Siberia are too meager to supply China from the Russian Ural industrial area.

It was these troops who marched under a safe-conduct of the American-sponsored truce through Kalgan Pass and returned with Japanese arms that won the decisive battles in Manchuria in the summer of 1947. They were opposed by the government's American-trained divisions. While the Communists were being rearmed by the

Russians, the government divisions had their supplies cut off by what Marshall freely admits was a ten-month embargo on American military supplies to China. Since these Chinese divisions had been equipped in the spring and summer of 1945 their arms, ammunition, and trucks badly needed replacement. Two years of hard campaigning had worn their rifle barrels smooth, exhausted their ammunition, and battered the trucks they relied on for transport and supply. All of their equipment was American and without American replacements, spare parts, and ammunition it was virtually useless.

It did not take long for the well-armed Communists to chew up the government divisions armed only with the worn remnants of two-year-old American equipment and minus an effective air force. The Chinese armies that Stilwell and Wedemeyer trained in India and West China perished early in 1947 on the frozen Manchurian plains. The stage was set for the final mop up of Manchuria in the summer of 1948 and the Communist offensive into North China that at this writing has swept almost to the north bank of the Yangtze and gravely threatens Nanking and Shanghai.

Marshall also sought, as part of his orders, to force the Generalissimo into a variety of political changes including formation of a coalition government with Communists in the cabinet.

At the time of the Marshall mission the Chinese Communists terms for entering the Chinese National government were one third of the cabinet members including the War Minister, retention of a Communist army of forty-eight divisions, and the governorships of all provinces where the Communist troops then claimed occupation of a majority of the area. The fate of Czechoslovakia has since proved how fatal this would have been to the existing government of China. Inclusion of Communists in a coalition front is a standard preliminary tactical maneuver in a Communist seizure of power. It is a technique that may well be attempted again in China if the Communists feel that an attempt to gain complete military victory may cost more than they can afford.

The Generalissimo had been dealing with Communists inside and outside the Chinese government for more than twenty years. He spent part of his education in Moscow's Communist academies. He thoroughly understood the Communist motives and techniques and knew that a Communist minority in a coalition government would actually result in complete Communist domination of China.

Marshall was then just beginning his political dealings with the Communists. It is obvious he has learned a good deal about their

tactics since then. Marshall's orders in China did not permit him to act as though the struggle between the Communists and Chinese government were anything more than minor maneuvering between rival political factions. He was not able then to view it as the basic struggle that it certainly is wherever that issue is drawn. Marshall had to persist in professing the idea that including Communists in a coalition government was no more serious than adding a few Republicans to a Democratic cabinet. Too many Americans tend to interpret the life and death struggles of foreign politics in the same light as the bitter but by no means fatal rivalry of American politics. There is a vast difference.

When his coalition plans collapsed and fighting flared again, Marshall finally gave up his China venture. He returned to the United States with a "plague on both your houses" speech that was a remarkable confession that his early profession of faith in the integrity of the Communists was not justified by their subsequent actions. Marshall's disillusionment over the prospect of working with Communists on a basis of mutual trust was symptomatic of the general shift in American policy toward Russia that occurred during roughly the same period. American policy in Europe was adjusted to this realistic appraisal of the Communists and their intentions. Our China policy never changed.

While Marshall has done a good job of applying the lessons of his Chinese political education to Europe, he has been reluctant to undertake the fundamental reappraisal of his China policy required by subsequent events. Current American aid to China is largely food relief because of the State Department's insistence that military aid cannot be effective until the Chinese government inaugurates sweeping political and economic reforms.

In this policy I believe the State Department has the cart before the horse. Military aid should have top priority. Without a military decision there can never be the internal stability required for any effective reforms. Last March when the Marshall plan for China was presented to Congress, I was appalled to note that only one sixth of the program was devoted to the military aid so desperately needed.

At the request of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, then headed by Representative Charles Eaton of New Jersey, I flew from Shanghai to Washington to plead for a more realistic approach to China's problems and a more intelligent understanding of the United States stake in Asia. My fifty-one-hour flight on a Great Circle course from Shanghai to Washington via Northwest Airlines offered dramatic

evidence of how the Pacific world had shrunk when compared with my initial fourteen-day steamship trip to China in 1937.

I told Congress last March that unless effective military aid was immediately forthcoming for China, the Chinese Communists would overrun Manchuria and be well on their way to taking all of North China within six months. Congress authorized military aid of \$125,000,000 to China, but the summer was spent in endless dickering with the State Department and National Military Establishment over details of that aid, and not until October of 1948 did these munitions begin to flow to China. By then, seven months after my gloomy prophecy, the Communists had all of Manchuria and most of North China, and were marching toward Nanking.

The situation is now deteriorating so rapidly in China that I cannot venture further prophecy on its outcome. However, there are two salient facts of which I am sure. First is that the United States needs a new and effective policy in China. This will require a thorough re-examination of our present policy and our capacity to support any changes. But there is an acute danger that we may no longer have time for such consideration and that the Communists may win complete victory in China before a new American policy can be formed. Reliable reports indicate that the Communist generals are planning to force a Yangtze crossing early in the spring of 1949. Russians are now reported to be training a Chinese Communist air force near Mukden to provide the air cover without which a crossing of the Yangtze might be impossible. Captured Japanese planes and Russian second-line fighters are being turned over to the Chinese Communist air center.

In view of this situation the immediate goal of the United States must be some sort of holding action that will prevent a decisive Communist victory while our China policy is being debated. This action requires neither vast monetary nor military outlays. Its principal requirement is swift action lest we lose our chance forever. The recent history of China is studded with examples of how small, technically well-equipped forces can exert decisive influence in China out of all proportion to their size.

This holding action in China to prevent the Communists from organizing the great Chinese land mass against us is imperative if we are to gain the time required for a searching analysis of our world-wide foreign policy and the development of a sound method of working with the Chinese to replace our present policy of sticking a finger in the European dike while the Asiatic dam bursts.



My second certainty is that the price of peace in the Pacific world is going up at an astronomical rate, and we shall eventually have to pay that bill in full. Looking back over the last decade, we can easily trace the soaring cost of an effective American policy in China.

During the war, cost of such a program would have been negligible. The twin goals of defeating Japan and establishing a strong, friendly Chinese regime were originally inseparable segments of a common goal. Stilwell's failure to recognize this fact lost that opportunity and helped set off the chain reaction that brought us to the brink of the current crisis.

Immediately after the war the cost of China aid rose only slightly. Thanks to the good work done by Wedemeyer and his staff and the availability of a vast stock of war surplus in the Pacific bases, the Chinese government could have been given the military power to withstand aggression and turn to the pressing problems of internal reform with little additional cost to the American taxpayer. Marshall's arms embargo on China squandered that opportunity and gave the Chinese Communists the breathing spell they needed to refurbish their ragged hordes at the captured Japanese stockpiles in Manchuria.

By the spring of 1948 official estimates of the cost of China aid had risen to a billion and a half dollars plus establishment of a large American military mission in China. That opportunity, too, was lost largely as a result of the State Department's insistence on "economic" aid that did little but waste American dollars, instead of the military aid required. How high the cost will eventually go or how many further opportunities we will allow to pass without action I cannot guess. I am only sure that eventually we shall have to pay it in full just as we had to pay the long-deferred bill for a decade's indifference to the Orient that Japan presented at Pearl Harbor just seven years ago.

We face essentially the same choice the British faced in 1938 in Munich. I am well aware of the dangers of bleeding American economy white through a vast arms program and foreign aid. That could be as disastrous as military defeat. But we must face up to our present problem as the British failed to do at Munich. Then they were appalled at the possible price for resisting German aggression. They felt they could not afford that cost. Yet that choice only boosted the final bill to the fantastic total they had to pay. When the bill was finally presented they had no choice but to pay it or accept the end of their nation. The failure to pay the price at Munich eventually cost the British five grinding years of war that eroded their national economy to a bare sustenance level and lost the bulk of their empire. The United

States must not make the same mistake simply because we shrink from facing facts.

Many people now admit the validity of this thesis. Few, however, believe there is anything we can do about it. Can we really do anything? We most emphatically can! First we can throw in small, carefully selected military aid tailored to meet the specific problem of the moment in China—a holding action to defend the lower Yangtze Valley and Shanghai. If Shanghai can be held, it will prevent the Communists from organizing the north bank of the Yangtze well enough to support a military thrust across the river into South China.

Along with this aid we must send technically skilled and imaginative leaders who can improvise to meet rapidly changing situations and who can gain the confidence of the Chinese with whom they work. The Chinese may not understand the workings of an internal combustion engine, but they can see through a man and tell what makes him tick in an instant. They have been evaluating human nature for thousands of years and are experts. Naturally the Chinese will not work effectively with foreigners unless they feel these foreigners are genuinely sympathetic to their cause and country.

We must recognize that the Orient is a primary field of American interest and must stop allowing our affairs in this area to be conducted by second-rate men. We are only now beginning to develop some China experts in the field who show real promise, but policy in Washington is still formulated by incompetent scrubs in the State Department, not deemed fit to play in the European game, while men of Wedemeyer's caliber and ability sit on the side lines.

Many of our so-called China experts contend that things are so bad in China now that it is impossible to do anything to change them. This is sheer nonsense. This is the same type of thinking that said it was impossible for China to resist Japan in 1937. Yet it was Japan who suffered the final defeat.

The experts said the American Volunteer Group wouldn't last three weeks in combat, yet with 250 men and \$8,000,000 we smashed the Japanese air force over China and kept bombs off Chinese cities for the first time in three years.

The experts wrote off China as finished again when the Japanese took Burma and cut the last land line of supply. They said the air lift across the Hump was impractical and impossible. The airmen of the Air Transport Command and China National Aviation Corporation did the impossible by flying more than a million tons across the Hump and kept China going on airborne supply for as long as was necessary.

The military experts said the Japanese Army would run the Fourteenth Air Force out of East China, but again a handful of good men with good airplanes refused to be licked. In the spring of 1945 it was the starving Japanese Army that was getting out of East China as fast as its underfed legs could carry it, and not the Fourteenth Air Force.

Again after the war I was assured by the experts that it would be impossible for me to organize a new air line in China. Today that air line is flying 4,000,000 ton miles a month. I have been working with Americans and Chinese for so long now who have been doing the alleged "impossible" for many years that I have no patience with the critics who are experts only at inventing reasons for doing nothing. I think it is high time we scuttled them in favor of leaders who have the imagination, energy, and intelligence to accomplish the so-called impossible. That is certainly the type of leadership that has made the United States a great nation.

It is not yet too late for effective action in China. The Chinese Communist armies are operating off lines of supply that are badly stretched. Their present position is similar to that of the Japanese at the end of their initial push into East China in 1944 when they were vulnerable to the stranglehold of airpower. The Communists are now moving into territory that has not been politically organized in their favor as well as the northern provinces. The Communists, like the Japanese before them, do not—as yet—have the air umbrella necessary to protect their ground offensives against sustained air attacks. It is certainly not impossible for a small force of stout men who know the terrain to apply the best of modern equipment against critical Communist weak spots and halt the advance in its tracks. This would save the lower Yangtze Valley and South and West China as a base in which Chinese nationalism could reorganize, and after learning the lessons of its defeat, political and military, set out again under its own steam to liberate the rest of China.

Whatever happens in China's immediate future, if it is considered United States policy to prevent Communist organization of that country, it is necessary to maintain this base and maintain some form of non-Communist central government in China. If the territory not yet conquered by the Chinese Communists is allowed to revert to the domination of provincial war lords, it will eventually be divided, defeated, and absorbed by the Communists piecemeal just like the small separate states of eastern Europe.

The creation and preservation of a central government has been the historic role of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek in modern China.

He has been the driving will that has held together a country of loose political organization and primitive communications in even a semblance of national unity. It is significant that leaders of all the divergent political elements in China except the Communists have appreciated the necessity of Chinese unity. For this reason they have supported the Generalissimo on broad national issues regardless of their disagreements with him on internal policy. It is for this reason that I, too, have loyally supported the Generalissimo during my long residence in China. It was the Generalissimo who stood between China and surrender to Japan, and it was the Generalissimo who stood between China and complete chaos after the war.

Whatever the future may hold, it will be necessary to have some centralizing force to preserve the independent spirit of China and prevent its domination by foreign powers.

Despite a decade of American bungling in China this country still has a vast reservoir of good will among the Chinese people. The Chinese government now has little faith in us because of the long record of broken American promises and action that only served to strengthen the Communist opposition. In the coastal ports most Chinese look on the Americans as successors to the British and French economic imperialists whose only aim is to exploit China for personal profit. But in the vast hinterland there are millions of Chinese who still look on the United States as the only hope in establishing a peaceful and independent China and still remember the American airmen as the reason Japanese bombs stopped falling.

It would not take much concrete effective aid to capitalize on this sentiment. Many Chinese are now accepting the Communists only because they feel the United States has abandoned China to its fate. At the first real sign of American interest in China these marginal millions would abandon the Communists.

As a practicing warrior for many years, I am convinced of the complete futility of war. It settles only problems of the past and creates the new problems of the future. There is no place in the world today for the narrow, competitive nationalism that sparks the tinder of war. My long experience as an airman has taught me the folly of the artificial borders of political states. The ease with which the airman passes them by with his load of peaceful commerce or atomic destruction should have served notice long since that they are no longer necessary.

I am convinced that the people of this planet must ultimately and inevitably move toward a single form of world government if civiliza-

tion is to survive. But it is our immediate task to see that this world government comes as a mutual federation of free peoples rather than through the ruthless domination of a master state enslaving all the others. In this struggle there are still many battles that cannot be avoided. The most critical of these now is to prevent the Communists from organizing the vast and rich land mass of China under their whip and turning its weight against us and the other free peoples of the world.

CLAIRE LEE CHENNAULT

Shanghai, China,  
January, 1949.

## WAY OF A FIGHTER



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MY China years really began in an Arkansas hospital bed. In the spring of 1937 I was ending twenty years as an Army Air Corps fighter pilot in the Army-Navy General Hospital at Hot Springs, grounded from all flying and suffering from severe chronic bronchitis, low blood pressure, deafness, plus general physical exhaustion strongly seasoned with mental frustration. I was then approaching forty-seven and ticketed for an early retirement for physical disability. Less than four months later I was flying through Japanese flak and fighters over Shanghai in the midst of the Sino-Japanese war.

This sudden transformation had its roots deep in my military career. All my life I wanted to be a soldier. But until flying came along I never found a segment of military life entirely to my liking. My ancestors were Huguenots who left Alsace-Lorraine in 1778 to fight with Lafayette in the Revolutionary War. They settled in southwestern Virginia. Succeeding generations pushed westward through Tennessee and Mississippi to the flood plains of Louisiana. There, in 1842, my grandfather settled to clear three hundred acres of rich bottom land and devote the rest of his life to raising cotton and a large family. In the course of that westward migration the Chennault line crossed with that of Sam Houston, founder of Texas, whose mother was the sister of my great-grandmother. My own mother, Jessie Lee, was related to Robert E. Lee through her father, Dr. William Wallace Lee, a surgeon in the Army of Virginia.

Although born in Commerce, Texas, in 1890, my earliest recollections are of roaming the oak woods and moss-draped cypress swamps of the Mississippi flood plains in northeast Louisiana. Even today it is still a struggle to keep the wilderness at bay there. Beyond the fringes of cleared cotton fields, wolves, bear, deer, wild turkey, occasional panthers, and many smaller species of wild game still roam in the tangled thickets.



My mother died when I was five and my father, John Stonewall Chennault, who lived to be eighty, had a fine understanding of the love of a boy for the woods. He gave me a free hand in wandering, and many times I stayed out for a week at a time—with a piece of bacon to fry freshly caught fish and a sack of corn meal to make bread. Always I returned with a bag of game for the family table. I learned to hunt with the unique zest of a man who hunts to eat his kill. It is a passion that has never left me. I shot my first gun, a Winchester rifle, when I was eight, and hunted before then with a pack of terrier dogs chasing rats, possums, and skunks. Since then I have hunted and fished all over the world, but a spring never passes without my thoughts turning to bass on the Tensas River. In the fall, though I may be in the hubbub of a Chinese city, I can almost hear the crash of a big buck deer through the canebrake. Whenever I have been in the United States during the past ten years, no matter how brief the visit, I have always managed to sink a line into a Louisiana river if only for a few hours. And for the people who stop fishing in the cold weather because they have never learned how to go deep after bass in the winter with weighted pork rind bait I feel only pity because they waste so much good fishing time.

Life in the woods and on the bayous and lakes of northeast Louisiana taught me self-confidence and self-reliance and forced me to make my own decisions. After reaching the age of twelve, I preferred to hunt and fish alone. I was too young for adult companionship and knew too much of woodcraft to desire companionship of boys of my own age. I made my own camp, found and cooked my food, and felt most at ease when buried deep in the woods.

When I was ten, my father married again. His bride was Lottie Barnes, my teacher in the Gilbert grade school. His choice of a wife could not have been better, for I had already learned to love her. Reared on a farm near Calhoun, Louisiana, she too loved nature. Before her marriage to my father, we had had many horseback rides, walks, and picnics together. She encouraged me to live the life I loved so well. She also encouraged me to be ambitious. It was not sufficient for her that I be acknowledged the best hunter, fisherman, and athlete among the boys of my own age. She also demanded that I lead in scholastic standing. Until her sudden death five years after her marriage to my father, she was my best and almost only companion. After her death, when I was fifteen, I was alone again and really never found another companion whom I could so completely admire, respect, and love.

The freedom which I enjoyed as a child and the sympathetic, loving tutelage of my stepmother during the formative years of my boyhood molded my character into a pattern that was a little different from that of my contemporaries and not wholly suitable to the needs of modern society. Although I did not become distinctly antisocial, I was never popular among older boys, whose leadership I refused to follow. As a result I had the choice of fighting my battles alone or organizing younger boys, who accepted my leadership. I was always eager to instruct and lead younger boys and quick to take over the quarrel of the smaller or weaker boy. Without conscious impulse, I constantly strove to be first in anything I undertook. I simply had to run faster, jump farther, swim faster, dive deeper, catch the longest string of fish, shoot better, make the best grades in all of my classes, do the most work on the farm, and read more books than any of my contemporaries. I pitched on the baseball team, played center on the basketball team and quarterback at football. Second place had no attraction for me in any line of activity. I was inclined to be shy, sensitive to criticism or ridicule, and rarely confided my real feelings or thoughts to anyone older. I had an insatiable urge to win, to lead in any activity in which I engaged, to instruct others who were less proficient, but I never felt particularly elated when I won.

I early developed very fast mental reactions and muscular coordination. It required very little time for me to estimate a situation, make a plan, and go into action. I was always impatient with anyone who required more time to do these things. This trait produced unfortunate results in later years because I was seldom able to explain my plans in detail to my superiors. Usually, it never occurred to me to explain my plans, and I suffered a defensive complex if required to do so. My best results were attained when given complete freedom to act upon my own initiative.

While still in grade school I pored over history books in my grandfather Lee's library reading about the Peloponnesian and Punic wars. Although I had no idea where Greece, Carthage, and Rome were, I was enthralled by the charging elephants, armored warriors, and burning ships in the colored engravings of the battles of Thermopylae, Zama, Cannae, and Salamis.

I liked history, geography, and mathematics. I read and digested textbooks as eagerly as other boys read dime thrillers. While I was in grade school, often an additional grade was passed by summer reading of textbooks. The ten grades taught in the Gilbert school were completed before I was thirteen. A year's "postgraduate" work

was necessary because I was too young to enter college. I became interested in religion at an early age, largely because of the historical interest that I found in the Bible, and was baptized and received in the Baptist Church when I was eleven years old.

My first taste of military life came while a freshman cadet at Louisiana State University, where I enrolled in the agricultural course. I had no desire to be a farmer, but all the grade school at Gilbert could offer, plus a year of extra study, left me with insufficient credit for any other college course. I entered L.S.U. when I was fourteen, and like every other student, settled down in the red brick pentagon barracks that enclosed the old campus where military discipline governed the student corps of cadets.

A few days after enrollment an upperclassman, posing as Officer of the Day, gave me an introduction to the traditional hazing of freshmen. I was routed from my room and given a rifle with fixed bayonet with stern orders to patrol the entrance to the barracks allowing no one to enter or leave without a pass from the Officer of the Day. As I paced the post before the entrance, upperclassmen bombarded me with pitchers of water from the second-story windows. I continued to walk my post, drenched to the skin, with my temper so hot I could almost hear the water sizzle as each new deluge hit me. When mess call sounded I was still on guard and determined to get even. Upperclassmen streaming down to the mess hall were met by the point of my bayonet, backed by a pair of very determined eyes. The joke ceased to be funny as the afternoon wore on without lunch and nobody quite willing to see if I was bluffing. It took a long time to find the real Officer of the Day, who officially relieved me of my post and released the hungry cadets.

I applied for admission to both West Point and the Naval Academy. In 1909 I went to Annapolis to take entrance examinations. Sight of the grim gray walls on the Severn chilled my enthusiasm to become an admiral. After two days of sweating through examinations, some kind soul informed me that midshipmen were confined to Academy grounds for their first two years. Thought of two solid years behind stone walls was too much for a lad used to wandering the Louisiana wilderness all summer long. I turned in a blank final examination paper, telegraphed my father I had failed, and caught the next train back to Louisiana.

My military career at L.S.U. was further complicated by the fact that the best fishing on the Tensas River occurred in early summer just before the university officially closed. I discovered that a carefully

timed accumulation of demerits enabled me to be expelled annually just after I passed all final examinations and received academic credits. Expulsion then sent me home a week early and netted seven precious days on the Tensas. There was always some trouble being reinstated in the fall, but since my grades were good and my Uncle Nelson was a well-known educator in the state, I always managed.

One year I faced a serious crisis. The end of the term rolled around with me still three demerits short of expulsion. Although I had no taste for beer then, I volunteered to go over the barracks wall to fill the pails of my thirsty fellow students, hoping to run afoul of the guards and acquire the badly needed demerits. I made the trip to Baton Rouge and back with foaming buckets of beer without encountering a guard. After delivering the beer, I had to hunt for a guard who could report my offense.

At one cadet review Pvt. C. L. Chennault stood in the rear ranks with his trousers rolled up to get a few demerits. The Regular Army officer in charge of cadets ordered him front and center and before the assembled corps bellowed, "Chennault, you will never make a soldier."

His opinion was later shared by a Captain H. H. Salmon, Jr., whose name I remember vividly because it was signed to a long document rejecting my first application for flight training with the comment: "Applicant does not possess necessary qualifications for a successful aviator."

Military aviation let me in through the back door while the Captain Salmons weren't looking. A rickety old Curtiss pusher biplane, wobbling through the air at the Louisiana State Fair in 1910, first turned my ambitions upward. Like most young men, I was looking for bright new worlds to conquer and, as is the habit of youth, regretted that I had been born so late when all the most glamorous frontiers had disappeared. There was no new land to open in the West—no more Indians to fight—and the future seemed very dull indeed. That primitive flying machine bumping through the thermals of a hot, sticky summer day in Shreveport gave me my first glimpse of a new frontier and sowed the seed of my desire to fly. It took a long time for that seed to germinate. For many years my prospects of ever flying seemed extraordinarily dim.

My last college year was spent at Louisiana State Normal School to qualify for a teaching job. My first post was in the one-room Athens, Louisiana, country school where the annual crop of oversize farm boys made the life of a teacher miserable and had cut the average

tenure to less than a term. My principal qualification for the job was that I was still a minor and could legally commit assault and battery on the unruly students, many of whom were older and larger than I was. It took a few stiff sessions with bare knuckles behind the schoolhouse to clinch that job. The next year we channeled the surplus energy into a baseball team that was undefeated in northern Louisiana. I pitched and nobody could tell me from the students. I liked country-school teaching, despite the meager salary, because school closed early in the spring so the students could help with planting and didn't begin again until after harvest in the fall. That left me with a long season for hunting and fishing.

Marriage and the first two children of an eventual octet made economic problems more acute and I drifted through the South in a succession of teaching jobs, looking for better pay—English instructor in a Biloxi, Mississippi, business college; assistant physical-training director of a Y.M.C.A. in Louisville—and finally wound up in 1916 in an Akron, Ohio, war plant making automobile-tire tubes for the Allies. When the United States declared war in April, 1917, I immediately applied for flight training. The answer was the first of many firm “no’s.” I was then twenty-six and the father of three children, a superannuated old dodo by modern airmen’s standards.

The Army accepted me for training in an officers’ training school in Indiana in August, 1917. I emerged in November, a “ninety-day wonder” with silver bars and a commission as first lieutenant of infantry. First assignment was with the 90th Division at Fort Travis in San Antonio. Just across the city was a recently cleared cotton plantation called Kelly Field where the aviation section of the Signal Corps was training pilots in that weird assembly of spruce, wire, and doped fabric known as the Jenny (Curtiss JN-4). When Kelly asked for officer volunteers, I eagerly crossed the city with a vision of pilot’s wings gleaming on my tunic. However, my job was to bellow infantry drill at hordes of green aviation cadets pouring off the trains in San Antonio. I stayed at Kelly almost a year, and while the Signal Corps was rejecting me for flight training three more times, I learned to fly.

Taking advantage of the general confusion around Kelly, I found a few genial instructors who were willing to explain the fundamentals of flying from the rear cockpit of a Jenny. Charley Leonard, a veteran instructor even for those early days, soloed me unofficially, and a young pilot, Lieutenant Ralph, obligingly rolled out a Jenny whenever I wanted to fly solo. He taxied out to the flight line and climbed out as I jumped in and took off.

Wangling a transfer to an outlying staging field as engineering efficiency officer put me in charge of gassing and checking training planes in and out of the field. My job was to chalk up the maximum number of flying hours for the field, so whenever there was no cadet handy to take a freshly gassed plane, I hopped in and racked up another hour of flying time.

Flying was so new to the Army then that there were few regulations covering the subject. Needing a vacation, I once flew a Jenny to Dallas and was A.W.O.L. for a week. Nobody missed me or the plane. One frustrated soul who enlisted specifically to be a pilot and wound up a mechanic stole a Jenny at Kelly Field while everybody was at lunch. He finally wrapped the plane around a water tank, trying to land at Brooks Field. When the judge advocate tried to prosecute, he found there were no regulations covering who could fly a plane.

In the fall of 1918 I went to Mitchel Field on Long Island as adjutant of the 46th Fighter Squadron awaiting shipment to France. One rainy October day we trudged across the Mineola plains, loaded with full field pack including folding washbasins, to entrain at Garden City for a port of embarkation. Halfway to our destination the column halted, turned around, and marched back to Mitchel—the Armistice was brewing and all overseas shipments were suddenly stopped.

Back at Mitchel there was a rush order for Southern officers to forestall a mutiny of Negro construction troops who were enlarging Langley Field, Virginia, from the mud of Chesapeake Bay. The trouble quickly faded but before I could get clear of Langley, the dread influenza epidemic struck. Planes were rolled out of hangars to make room for the flood of stricken soldiers. I was quarantined in a hangar in charge of 102 patients. There was a steady stream of stretcher-bearers hauling the dying out of one end and bringing fresh cases in the other. Flu hit me hard. I was hauled away one afternoon to a small outbuilding where the dying spent their last hours. The officer next to me died early in the evening. I was barely conscious when a doctor and nurse came in to check him off and a detail carried him away. As they left, the doctor told the nurse to lock the door.

She protested, "The other boy isn't dead yet."

"He will be before morning," the doctor answered. "Lock the door."

I was still alive in the morning but barely kicking and it was my good friend, Lieutenant Ralph from Kelly Field, who really saved my life. He turned up as assistant provost marshal of Langley Field, with a large stock of excellent liquor confiscated from rum-runners who were then active in the bay. Ralph left me a quart of good bour-

bon, and I recovered rapidly. My orders to flying school finally arrived, and I was on a train back to San Antonio when the Armistice was declared. Ralph was killed in a crash a few months later.

Back at Kelly and flying officially for the first time, I nearly washed out. I had eighty hours of "bootleg" flying time under my belt when the official instruction began and had picked up some sloppy flying habits during my surreptitious soloing. Unfortunately, I drew an instructor—Pop Liken—who was as bullheaded and fiery tempered as myself. He had a nasty habit of not explaining errors but simply jerking the stick violently out of a student's hand on the dual controls to indicate his displeasure. After a brief taste of this treatment, I warned Liken that the next time he jerked the controls I would refuse to fly, and it would be his airplane. We were practicing a forced landing, gliding for a cornfield with throttle cut, when Pop jerked the stick away. I got off the controls and let the Jenny continue on down in a whistling dive. Pop expected me to take over and recover, but my dander was up, and I let us go screaming down. Pop finally realized I was as stubborn as he was and jammed on full throttle to recover just above the corn tassels. When we landed, he couldn't run fast enough to the operations office to write a washout recommendation for me.

The Washout Board gave me another chance and assigned me to Ernest M. Allison, a kindly and superbly competent pilot who knew as much about human nature as he did about airplanes, for a final check flight. He has had a long aviation career as pioneer air-mail flyer, test pilot for Boeing Aircraft Company, pilot and operations director for China National Aviation Corporation, and is now in charge of all C.N.A.C. operations in Asia.

Allison listened to my story as we flew on what was generally a student's last ride. After an hour he signaled for a landing, climbed out, and waved me on alone. I think I was one of the very few students to solo in the washing machine, so called because its main function was washing out cadets.

To "Allie" I owe my first glimpse of the kind of flying that really made me love the air. Previously all my flying had been confined to the easy conventional maneuvers. Allison gave me my first taste of acrobatics, and I was hooked for flying like a Tensas River bass on a minnow-covered barb. Allison was an expert acrobatic pilot, but he had little personal taste for these violent maneuvers. I loved them from the start—the way the horizon spins around your nose in a roll, the kaleidoscope of sky and earth in a loop, the feeling of hanging tight

against the safety belt in inverted flight, and the precise co-ordination of hands and feet on stick, rudder, and throttle that merges man and machine into a single instrument seeking mastery of an element. I learned all that Allison could teach me, and when I graduated from flying school in the spring of 1919 I was well satisfied with the rating on my record—"fighter pilot."

My discharge from the wartime Army came through in the spring of 1920, but I had the taste of flying in my craw and could not get it out. I spent the summer back on my cotton plantation awaiting word on an application for a regular commission in the newly organized Air Service. In the fall I became one of the first thousand officers in the organization that eventually grew to be the three-million-man Army Air Forces of World War II.

The next summer the famous First Fighter Group came to my station at Ellington Field, Texas, glittering with a host of wartime aces and commanded by the then Major Carl Spaatz, who later commanded American Strategic Bomber Forces in Europe and the Pacific and as a full general became first commander of the independent U. S. Air Force. The First Group flew trim little French Spads and British SE-5's, painted with the stars and spangles the squadrons had made famous in combat over the Western Front. They were still flying foreign machines because, as late as 1921, the American aircraft industry had not yet produced a fighter that could equal either French, German, or British models.

I was accepted for the first fighter-pilot course given by the group and assigned to the famous 94th Fighter Squadron, then commanded by Frank (Monk) Hunter, World War I ace and later a major general commanding the Eighth Fighter Command in England. Its "hat in the ring" insignia had been flown by many of the top-ranking American aces, including Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker. Along with Joe Cannon, later commander of the Twelfth Air Force in Italy, I shared top honors of the class.

For four months we flew and fought all over the Texas sky in the fashion of the Western Front—flying long patrols in formation, looking for a fight, and then scattering in a dive on the enemy into individual dogfights. As sport it was superb, but as war, even then, it seemed all wrong to me. There was too much of an air of medieval jousting in the dogfights and not enough of the calculated massing of overwhelming force so necessary in the cold, cruel business of war. There were no sound military precepts that encouraged the dispersion of force and firepower that occurred in dogfighting.



As flying freshmen who had never seen combat, we played a very soft second fiddle to the bemedaled veterans. In one attempt to improve their tactics Joe Cannon was nearly killed. Instead of the traditional rolling dive away from an attacker diving on your tail, I suggested an Immelmann (a half loop with a roll out on top) as a harder maneuver for the attacker to follow. Three of us set out to try it; Joe Cannon, flying an SE-5, attacked Don Stace, later commander of the Seventh Air Force in Japan, and myself in Spads. The Spad was not too good in a climb, and Stace had never done an Immelmann before.

When Cannon dived on us we hauled back on the stick and rocketed upward. As I rolled out on top of the Immelmann, tragedy unfolded below. Stace had changed his mind in the midst of the maneuver and fell out of the Immelmann in a tight spiral. Cannon, trying to follow us up, crashed into the spiraling Spad. Bits and pieces flew in all directions as the two wings crashed against each other.

Stace managed to nurse his Spad to a forced landing and escaped unhurt. Cannon's SE-5 was chewed to bits. It fell off crazily from five thousand feet with pieces still spraying out. We had heard about parachutes in those days, but nobody had seen one yet. Joe rode the wreck down until it splattered into the ground. I circled low over the wreckage on my way back to the field and made a mental note to request a hearse instead of an ambulance. It didn't seem possible that a human being could have survived that crash. Cannon not only survived but walked from the ambulance to the hospital door under his own power, with broken ribs, a shattered jaw, and his face badly rearranged.

Not until I went to Hawaii in 1923 was there a chance to work out new fighter tactics. For nearly three years I commanded the 19th Fighter Squadron at Luke Field on Ford Island in the middle of Pearl Harbor. It is now a Navy field and was a prime target in the Japanese attack on December 7, 1941. We flew tricky MB-3 biplanes with a fighting cock insignia and were generally credited with living up to our emblem. For two years we made life miserable for the Navy and antiaircraft-artillery brass; we led the Army Air Corps with an official rating as the most effective squadron in the corps and had athletic teams that could beat almost all comers at anything when a barrel of beer was at stake. Only once did our athletic prowess really droop. One of the squadron officers, overimbued with enthusiasm, challenged another squadron to a 440-yard swimming relay race. When we counted noses, we found only three officers in the squadron,

including myself, who could swim one hundred yards. One had never swum a race before. The course lay between a pier and a float, and our only solution lay in banking on my Mississippi-catfish crawl to take care of two of the four relay laps. I took off from the pier and gave our second man a good lead, which he managed to hold while I lay on the float recovering my breath for the final lap. Our big question mark plunged from the pier for the third leg to the float, but the pace proved too much for him. Not far past the halfway mark, he sank exhausted, and I had to forego the final lap to plunge in and tow him to shore.

Looking back, I think my Hawaiian duty was my happiest time in the Air Corps. I had my first command, and a soldier feels about his first command like a boy with his first love—bigger and better things may come his way later, but there is always a special place in his heart for the first. My family was all together, and Bobbie, the last of six boys, was born in Hawaii. I was in top physical condition, growing lean, tanned, and hard and sporting a huge black mustache with waxed tips in the best fighter-pilot tradition. With a deep tan, fierce mustachio, and white dress uniform, I fancied I cut quite a figure. Later I had to shave the mustache when I became a flying instructor at Brooks Field. It frightened the cadets.

I was flying almost every day and leading my squadron into exploration of new tactics. My love of flying was never stronger, and there was a host of new kinds of fish to lure.

The only two burrs in the saddle—the antiaircraft artillery and the Navy—really afforded good sport. The antiaircraft boys were riding high during the early postwar years. For reasons best known to themselves they were proclaiming that flak had rendered the airplane obsolete because antiaircraft gunners could shoot down every plane before it reached a target. Since coast-artillery commanders outranked air-force brass, all tests were conducted according to the gunners' rules. Tow target planes flew a fixed course at predetermined speed and altitude. A real gunner could hardly miss with that cold-deck deal, and the artillery boasting irked all pilots.

I spent many long hours flying copilot in bombers, with my good friend, Alfred Hegenberger, towing targets for the ground gunners. Hegenberger is a brilliant airman. He won two Distinguished Flying Crosses in peacetime—one as navigator of the first trans-Pacific flight from San Francisco to Hawaii and the other for perfecting blind-landing techniques. Later he was my chief of staff for the Fourteenth Air Force in China, and as a major general, he commanded the Tenth

Air Force after it moved to China in the final deal from another stacked deck. Often in sheer boredom at the fixed course, speed, and altitude routine we kicked the bomber over in a wingover that snapped the target cable and flew home. The gunners always chalked up a direct hit.

One day while the 19th was patrolling over Oahu, we spotted a string of flak batteries neatly lined up along a sandy beach, blazing away at poor "Hegy," who was droning back and forth on his fixed orbit, dragging the white target sleeve behind him. I decided to inject a note of realism into this nonsense and give the flak gunners a taste of what they might expect in a real war. Wagging my wings, I led the entire squadron down in a dive-bombing attack on the guns. As we pulled out above the beach, the gunners scuttled for cover. We buzzed back and forth in simulated strafing runs at a hundred feet. I chased the colonel in command up and down the beach. We were so low that I could easily identify his sunburned bald head gleaming in the sun. He looked so funny waddling in the sand I leaned out of my cockpit to laugh at him.

When we got back to Ford Island, the field was in an uproar. Higher headquarters had been burning up the phones with indignation over the outrage. It seems the coast artillery were doing their annual firing for the official record, and it would take days to get them in shape to continue.

"Any idea who did it?" I inquired innocently.

"No," replied the base commander, "but the artillery colonel says it was that damned Frenchman with the big black mustache."

I was confined to the post for a week but it was worth it. Many years later we used the same idea to give Japanese gunners a bad time at Hankow, sending in fighters and cannon-carrying Mitchell bombers to bomb and strafe gun positions and searchlights while heavy bombers pounded the warehouse areas.

The Navy gave us our first test of formation fighting in the 1925 joint maneuvers when the Air Corps defended Pearl Harbor against an attack from Navy carriers—a problem that was practiced regularly until 1941. I was obsessed with the idea of holding a formation together during the violent acrobatics of combat and concentrating its firepower, instead of scattering it all over the sky in dogfights. In those days the idea of doing loops, rolls, and Immelmans with somebody hanging onto your wing was enough to give even the hot pilots a chill—the danger of collision seemed too great.

I snared the two oldest and most conservative pilots in the squadron

into apparently innocent discussions of the theory of formation acrobatics, which got progressively more serious and detailed, until they stimulated the inevitable suggestion that we try them in the air. When they found out it could be done with a nucleus of three planes, they were sold on the idea. We practiced in secret and then staged a surprise show over Luke Field. After that, every pilot in the squadron had to join in the experiments or lose face.

Our first formation attack completely surprised the Navy. One afternoon on patrol off Oahu we sighted a squadron of Vought dive bombers high above us streaking in to bomb Pearl Harbor, much as the Japs did some sixteen years later. They sighted us but figured we were too low to attack and bored on toward their target. Our entire squadron pulled up in a formation Immelmann that brought us out on the tail of the Navy bombers in perfect position to attack. We opened throttles and ploughed through the Voughts without breaking formation. If the shooting had been for keeps, the Navy bombers would have been wiped out before they knew what hit them. As it was, one Navy pilot was so surprised he spun out of the formation.

There was no air-raid warning system in Hawaii then, so we organized our own crude alert system by putting two enlisted men on top of the field water tower. Each scanned 180 degrees of the horizon with a pair of powerful binoculars. They could spot approaching planes from four to six miles out and give us enough warning over a loud-speaker to scramble off the runway in time to meet the attack in the air.

On a Saturday morning, the day before maneuvers were scheduled to end, the water-tank spotters reported a lone Navy observation plane approaching from the sea. I took off and attacked. My dive brought me so close to the Navy plane's tail that the propeller seemed about to chew off his rudder. I will never forget the look of horror flashing across that sailor's face when he turned and saw the propeller threshing within an ace of his tail. He pushed over into a vertical dive. I followed him down, still glued to his tail. When he failed to pull out at two thousand feet, I pulled up alongside to wave reassurance. He was staring straight ahead, frozen to the controls. He crashed into the sea below me as I pulled up.

The pilot was injured but survived to take a 10 number reduction on the Navy promotion list. Possibly one reason for the admirals' wrath was the document the Army rescue crew fished from the observer's pockets. It contained an official Navy statement dated Sunday, after maneuvers were scheduled to end, announcing the complete triumph

of the carrier planes over the land-based Air Corps defenders. The statement was written at least thirty-six hours before the maneuvers ended. The Navy pilot's mission was to land at Luke Field, give himself up as a prisoner, and allow the observer to file the faked dispatch with local newspapermen for a big splash of Navy propaganda in the Sunday papers, while Army spokesmen were still preparing their statement.

After the maneuvers ended, the Navy sent a yeoman to our squadron to take exhaustive notes on our combat tactics. I wrote a new manual of fighter tactics based on the experiences of the 19th. It won an official commendation and then gathered dust on a Washington shelf.

Back at Brooks Field in Texas, after my Hawaiian hitch was finished, I had my first brush with the Russians. I was flying instructor there and later director of primary training, but as a sideline Benjamin Chidlaw, later a Wright Field engineering expert, a Sergeant Nichols, who was a pioneer parachutist, and myself began experimenting with paratrooper techniques. The idea had been originally suggested by Brigadier General Billy Mitchell. Our problem was to find workable techniques.

We finally evolved a V formation of de Havilland two-seaters, each carrying one paratrooper in the rear cockpit. I flew a Ford trimotor transport in the center of the V, loaded with equipment. As we flew over an objective, the troopers bailed out, and ammunition, machine guns, water, and food were parachuted from the Ford so they fell inside the circle of paratroopers on the ground.

We polished this technique until the paratroopers were opening fire with machine guns in less than a minute after they landed. We were extremely proud of our show when Major General Charles P. Summerall, then Army chief of staff, came to Brooks to witness a demonstration in 1928. General Summerall waited until the chutes blossomed and then turned his back on the exhibition with the comment, "Some more of this damned aviation nonsense."

He strode away without waiting to see the finish. Summerall also testified against the Air Corps at Billy Mitchell's trial, stating under oath that a fighter squadron could be organized in forty-eight hours and gasoline was not necessary for air-corps training. I also remember Summerall as Army commander in Hawaii, inspecting the 19th Fighter Squadron. We lined up with a pilot and mechanic beside each single-seater fighter as Summerall swept down the line. He was incensed

because two men stood with each plane, and there was only a parachute for one.

A few weeks after the Summerall fiasco, a Russian military mission, headed by a General Baranoff, rolled onto the field in a cavalcade of black Packard limousines. War Department orders were to show them everything we had, so the paratroops jumped again.

When the rest of the Russians thundered off in their Packards, one fellow, who said he was head of Amtorg, the Russian trading firm in the United States, stayed behind to visit me. After preliminary gifts of cases of vodka, chocolate, and caviar, he got down to business—would I go to Russia to develop paratroops?

"Hell, no," I stalled, "I'm a fighter pilot. This paratrooper business is just a sideshow."

"We don't think so," he replied. "Write and let me know your terms."

At that time, after nine years in the Army, I was a first lieutenant drawing about \$225 a month, including flying pay, plus rations and quarters for my family. I wrote Amtorg what I thought were exorbitant terms—a five-year contract and \$1,000 a month, plus expenses, rank of colonel, and the right to fly any plane in the Red Air Force.

The Russians wired back, "When can you leave?"

I stalled again on the ground that it would take time to move my family. They kept after me for several months until I returned their letters unopened. At that time I still had high hopes of helping to build an American air force, second to none. A few months later the War Department passed on word to "stop that parachute nonsense before somebody is hurt."

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PARTICIPATION on the officially unpopular side of two violent controversies put the final blight on my prewar military career. Blind opposition to the significance of airpower by the foggy-brained brass of the Army and Navy made every airman who believed in his trade a belligerent crusader. It is a tragic commentary on the intelligence of our military leadership and legislators that it took two years after the greatest war in history, in which airpower was the decisive margin between victory and defeat, to decide the issue of whether our air force should be independent and run by airmen or by admirals and ground generals who are still fighting airpower with all the bitterness and stupidity of the prewar years.

My part in the struggle for airpower was brief but, for me, decisive. It was in 1934 that Clark Howell, the Atlanta publisher, was appointed chairman of the Federal Aviation Commission to conduct another of the periodic investigations into airpower that are symptomatic of public uneasiness over the rough handling of airpower by politicians in peacetime. Five officers from the Air Corps tactical school at Maxwell Field, Alabama, volunteered to go to Washington and testify before the Howell committee. They were: Robert Olds, a pioneer of heavy bombardment, who later literally worked himself to death organizing the wartime Ferry Command and training heavy bomber crews for the air battle of Germany; Ken Walker, killed over Rabaul in the Solomons; Harold Lee George, who succeeded Olds as boss of the Ferry Command and was later president of Peruvian International Airlines; Don Wilson, eventually chief of staff to General George Kenney in the Southwest Pacific; and myself. The others discussed the theory and practice of strategic airpower. My topic covered more dangerous ground—the maneuvers of 1934. These maneuvers were a fiasco of trench warfare run by General C. E. Kilbourne of the War

Department general staff, that culminated in a bitter row between air and ground commanders.

The maneuvers posed a problem encountered so often in World War II—an amphibious landing on a hostile coast in the face of strong opposition. Under Kilbourne's planning the Blue defenders left the Atlantic beaches undefended and fell back thirty miles from the coast before digging in and making a stand. Invading Reds landed without opposition and marched thirty miles inland until they encountered the entrenched Blues. A trench-warfare stalemate ensued in the best 1917-18 tradition.

The Air Corps rushed into eastern fields overnight and was ready to blast Red supply lines and scatter the supporting fleet when Kilbourne vetoed the project. He restricted the entire air force, including "heavy" bombers, to bombing trench positions—tactics that in actual war proved about as effective as bean blowers against an armadillo. Our role finally became so ludicrous that Major General Oscar Westover, then assistant chief of the Air Corps, announced that he would no longer "butt his head against a stone wall" in an attempt to use the air force correctly.

Our testimony before the Howell committee was supposed to be given in executive session. When we marched into the hearing room there was General Kilbourne, with two War Department secretaries to record our testimony. We could feel the official noose tightening around our necks, but we had gone too far to turn back. Kilbourne sat silently while the theory of strategic airpower was discussed, but when I finished dissecting the maneuvers, he leaped to his feet. Although he was not scheduled to appear before the committee, he insisted that he be permitted to reply to my criticism of the maneuvers. He pounded the table and shook his finger at me as he defended his conduct on the fiasco. He concluded by justifying his tactics as "the only possible method of bringing the two opposing forces in contact."

"General, if that is the best you can do in the way of planning for future wars, perhaps it is time for the Air Corps to take over," I answered.

A few weeks later my name was permanently removed from the list of officers scheduled to go to the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. That meant the end of my Army career, for in peacetime, nobody could hope for a command or promotion to upper levels without the official stamp of Fort Leavenworth approval.

Four years earlier I had been sent to the Air Corps tactical school



at Langley Field, Virginia, as a student. On graduation I moved with the school to Maxwell Field as senior instructor in fighter tactics. In this capacity I became embroiled in another row that finally indicated that even the Air Corps held no future for me.

Bombardment is, of course, the sledge hammer of airpower. With the development of General Billy Mitchell's concepts of strategic bombardment, popularity shifted from the fighter boys, who dominated World War I in the air, to the lumbering bombers, even then growing bigger and faster. Many of the fighter aces of the Western Front switched to bombardment during the postwar years. Tremendous technical and tactical strides were made in this field while the fighters were almost completely neglected. It was this policy that forced General H. H. Arnold to admit before West Point cadets in October 1941, on the eve of Pearl Harbor, that "frankly, fighters have been allowed to drift in the doldrums."

When I was a student in the tactical school in 1931, Clayton Bissell, a World War I ace, was still teaching the fighter tactics of 1918. The dawn-patrol and dogfight tactics of the Western Front were so inadequate against the new bombers that Bissell had virtually abandoned the idea that fighters could shoot down bombers. He seriously recommended that fighters drop a ball-and-chain affair from above in the hope of fouling a bomber's propellers.

Appearance of the 235-mph, heavily armed Martin B-10, forerunner of the modern bomber, and publication of the Italian General Giulio Douhet's *The War of 194-*, which extolled the theory of bombardment supreme, stirred bomber enthusiasts to a new pitch of fanaticism. It became apparent that, just as the Navy was dominated by the "battle-ship admirals," so the Air Corps would be run from the bias of "bomber generals." These bomber generals had an inflexible orthodoxy all their own and were just as ruthless and unfair in squelching opposition within the Air Corps as the Army and Navy were in attempting to smother the development of all airpower.

The Douhet book, which became the secret strategic bible of the Air Corps, painted a brilliant picture of great bomber fleets fighting their way unescorted to targets, with the enemy fighters and flak impotent in the face of their fury. At that time there was considerable circumstantial evidence to support such a theory. The speed and armament of the Martin B-10 bomber matched two hundred and thirty-five miles per hour and five guns against the two hundred and twenty-five miles per hour and two guns of the Boeing P-26, then the standard Army and Navy fighter. The neglected field of fighter tactics, together

with the total lack of any means for obtaining information about the enemy and tracking his airplanes, made the contest then even more unequal.

As senior instructor in fighter tactics, I plunged into the job of modernizing fighter techniques with the greatest enthusiasm. Wheeling heavy bombers around never held any attractions for me. I was a fighter pilot for as long as I could fly. My experiences in Hawaii convinced me that an air force could never get along without fighters and that in any future war they would play as vital a role as bombers. The principle involved was that there ought to be some means for opposing any hostile offense with an active, effective defensive weapon.

Studying the documents of World War I, I discovered that many of the theories I had evolved independently in Hawaii had been developed earlier by the Germans. Oswald von Boelcke, an early German ace, was the real father of fighter tactics. He discovered that two planes could be maneuvered to fight together as a team, and he grasped the tremendous tactical implications of his discovery. For it has been a military axiom, at least since the time of Napoleon, that the difference between the firepower of two opposing forces—all other factors being equal—is not the difference in number of fire units but the square of the difference of the number of fire units. That meant that Boelcke's two-plane element attacking a lone enemy enjoyed odds not of 2 to 1 in its favor, but of 4 to 1.

Before he was killed in a collision with one of his own pilots in October, 1916, Boelcke taught his theories to young Manfred von Richtofen. During the winter of 1916-17, Richtofen molded his famous Flying Circus out of the new Fokker triplanes and Boelcke's tactics. In the spring of 1917, when good flying weather arrived, the Richtofen Circus burst over the Allied airmen like a hurricane. Richtofen's Circus was the first real fighter group fighting as a team according to sound military principles with the odds scientifically stacked in their favor. Allied airmen never defeated the Circus until after Richtofen was shot down and Herman Goering took command. Goering scorned the calculating tactics of Richtofen and led the Circus back into individual dogfights in which it was soon decimated.

Biggest problem of modern fighters was intelligence. Without a continuous stream of accurate information keeping the fighters posted on exactly where the high-speed bombers were, attempts at interception were like hunting needles in a limitless haystack. Playing blind-man's bluff with fighter patrols of the 1918 vintage was about as

effective in 1931 as employing sparrows to stop hawks from raiding the chicken yards.

The warning system then in vogue was a loose network of spotters who reported vaguely by telephone. Chief function of this net was supposed to be warning civilians to take cover rather than to provide defending fighters with intelligence for interceptions. Normal orders to defensive fighters then went something like this: "The enemy bombers reported over Point X at 9 A.M. Take off and destroy them."

It would then be 9:15, and X was twenty miles away. When we flew to X and returned after failing to sight any bombers, it was accepted as undeniable proof that fighters could not intercept modern bombers. During the 1931 Air Corps maneuvers the First Fighter Group, then commanded by Major Ralph Royce, later a major general, who had a succession of combat commands early in the war, didn't even see bombers attacking from Wright Field in two weeks of simulated combat. Major General Walter (Tony) Frank, official umpire, concluded that "due to increased speeds and limitless space it is impossible for fighters to intercept bombers and therefore it is inconsistent with the employment of air force to develop fighters."

Later "Hap" Arnold, then a lieutenant colonel, conducted Pacific Coast maneuvers on the same problem. He ordered squadrons of Martin B-10's from San Diego in an attack on March Field. Defending fighters at March Field took off according to strict military protocol. There was no vulgar scramble. Flights formed over the field and merged into squadrons. Squadrons then circled until the group commander took off and joined them to lead the formation. By that time the bombers had delivered their attack and departed. Only a few independent fighters, stationed at an outlying refueling field, made an interception. They scrambled into the air immediately on receipt of warning without benefit of protocol. Arnold concluded from these maneuvers that fighters would be ineffective in wartime. His report came to the tactical school for comment. I wrote an eight-page rebuttal criticizing the conduct of the defensive fighters and Arnold's conclusions.

He wrote back to the school asking, "Who is this damned fellow Chennault?"

I talked so loud and so long about the necessity for an aircraft warning net, and radio intelligence to the defending fighters in the air, that another Air Force maneuver was held in 1933 at Fort Knox, Kentucky, two years after the Wright Field blindman's-buff fiasco.

The entire plan for this maneuver was drawn by a board of Air Corps officers that did not include a single fighter pilot. The bombers

were based at Dayton, Ohio, the fighters at Louisville, Kentucky. Target for the bombers was the Army base at Ft. Knox. The bomber force had no fighters, and the defending fighter force had no bombers but was permitted to establish a net of observation posts with telephone communications to Fighter Control at Louisville.

Fighters intercepted and "attacked" the bombers by day and by night, using high, intermediate, and low altitudes on every attempt that was made. Before the maneuver period was half completed, the bomber boys set up a deafening clamor, blaming "unfair conditions," and began limiting the freedom of action of the defending pursuit force.

Two years after the Wright Field blindman's buff, the simple addition of three mobile cavalry field radios, manned by trained observers, plugged a blind spot in the warning net and enabled the First Fighter Group to intercept every bomber attack launched from Wright Field. In many cases the bombers were attacked more than once on the same mission. A good part of my time at the tactical school was spent studying warning-net systems developed by the English and Germans and devising improvements to aid fighter interceptions. It was after these maneuvers that I wrote the text, *The Role of Defensive Pursuit*. This text defines all of the principles and factors involved in the employment of defensive aircraft—whether single-seater fighters or modern jet- or rocket-propelled missiles. It was never really accepted by the U. S. Army, but it was the basis for the organization and operation of the famous Chinese air-warning net, which gave us a tremendous advantage over the Japanese Air Force in China from 1941 to 1945. A similar net would have saved the U. S. air units in the Philippines in 1941 from their swift annihilation.

The results of this maneuver were crystal clear to any open-minded observer:

1. Defending pursuit could make interception of attacking bombardment before the bombers reached their target if furnished timely information and if the interception area had sufficient depth to allow for necessary time factors.

2. Bombardment, flying deep into enemy territory, required friendly fighter protection to prevent heavy losses if not utter failure of the mission.

These were the two principal lessons that should have been learned from these maneuvers, but there were also numerous minor lessons and improvements in technique that were just as clear. All were calmly ignored by the bomber boys who controlled the development of the

Air Corps at that time and who were hell-bent for the Douhet air force of bombers only. The same Air Corps officers who ignored these lessons were in control of the air force in 1942 and 1943 when hundreds of unprotected B-24's and B-17's were shot down over Europe. They are responsible for the deaths of thousands of American boys who had been indoctrinated with the absolutely false theory that a bomber needs no protection from hostile fighters. It is ironic that these officers have been covered with decorations for the achievements of an air force that they almost destroyed in its first years of combat. It is indeed fortunate that the Battle of Britain in 1940 was not the Battle of America, for we would have had no Spitfires to win our battle.

To my mind, this failure to hold officials responsible for mistakes made in peacetime constitutes the greatest danger to our national defense. It is in time of peace that we must develop our technical equipment and train our personnel. We cannot do these things after the beginning of hostilities nor can we suddenly shift from one type of vital technical equipment to another after the fighting starts. Our leaders in peacetime should have sufficient imagination, vision, and experience to direct technical development and personnel training upon sound lines. Few of the major failures or mistakes of the last war will ever be properly investigated with a view to fixing responsibility. The people of America generously forgive their leaders for mistakes so long as we win the final victory. But who will guarantee that we will win the next victory—if we are again attacked first and depend upon blundering, shortsighted, unimaginative leaders?

Another stupid controversy raged over whether fighters needed range. The bomber boys claimed that they would never need fighter escort to a target and the only real function of fighters was to clamber upstairs like a monkey on a stick when enemy bombers appeared, attack them, and return to base. I wanted more range built into fighters, not only for long-range escort work, but to make them capable of long-range dive-bombing and strafing attacks on an enemy's rear. The only other person who talked long-range fighters then was Alexander P. de Seversky, and he was considered by Air Corps brass to be even crazier than a fighter pilot. Not until 1943, when unescorted B-17 raids on Germany were being chewed to bits by *Luftwaffe* fighters, was there a frantic effort to develop a long-range escort fighter. Without the long-range escort fighters the daylight bombing of Germany would have ended in bloody failure before the year was out.

I also fought for more firepower in fighters. In 1936 Wright Field armament engineers ridiculed the suggestion that four .30-caliber guns could be synchronized to fire through a propeller. In fact, they were positive that it was impossible to synchronize four guns on a single engine. In November 1937, I saw a Russian plane with four synchronized guns in action against the Japs in China.

Above all I tried to emphasize teamwork and formation fighting as the fundamentals of all fighter tactics. When Major General John F. Curry, tactical school commandant, saw the Navy Helldivers, an acrobatic trio, in action, he commissioned me to organize an Air Corps acrobatic team to beat them at their own game. Our team was picked by the simple process of inviting all candidates to try to stick on my wing for thirty minutes of violent acrobatics. Of the many who tried, only three pilots could do it—a young second lieutenant named Haywood (Possum) Hansell and two sergeants, redheaded, freckle-faced John H. (Luke) Williamson and chubby Billy MacDonald. Hansell retired from the team after our first year, and Billy moved up from substitute to fill the gap.

We dreamed up the label "Three Men on a Flying Trapeze" while singing the original version of that lament in a bar the night after our opening performance dedicated the Macon, Mississippi, airport. For three years the Three Men on a Flying Trapeze performed all over the country, from the cotton fields of Louisiana, for the edification of old neighbors, to the packed grandstands of the National Air Races in Cleveland. We did every acrobatic maneuver in the books and some that weren't, all in perfect formation. We did loops, spins, wingovers, chandelles, Immelmanns, snap and slow rolls, double rolls, and a squirrel-cage effect in which each plane rolled around the other while doing an individual barrel roll. We did three-turn tail spins in close formation and came out in formation although all three planes were out of control during the spin.

From the ground it looked as though our planes collided many times. Actually we never came closer than three feet, and the many thousands who turned out to see us crash were regularly disappointed. Our only mishap occurred during practice over my house near Montgomery, Alabama, and Mrs. Chennault was the only spectator. A sudden gust tossed "Possum" Hansell's wing into my tail, jamming the elevator and locking my control stick. There was nothing in the flight manuals about how to land without ailerons or elevators, but I managed to get down, using only the throttle to control my descent.

The routine that looked so smooth and easy from the ground took

many hundreds of hours in the air to perfect. For each show we trained down to a fine physical edge like a backfield getting ready for the big Thanksgiving Day football game.

Although we received many official Air Corps commendations and a caseful of civilian trophies, nobody seemed to realize that, far from being just a stunt, the Three Men on a Flying Trapeze were convincing proof of Boelcke's theory that fighters could battle together through the most violent maneuvers of combat.

During the depression years Air Corps funds were slashed so drastically that there was hardly enough money to buy gas for the four hours a month in the air required to collect flying pay. The battle between the bomber radicals and the handful of fighter advocates grew more bitter as the competition for money got stiffer. Bomber boys were already thinking about the then fantastic costs of the first four-engine Boeing B-17's. Every nickel spent on fighters seemed sheer waste to them.

Incredible as it may seem now, the issue then was not how many or what kind of fighters we should have but simply whether there should be any fighters at all. Pilots who merely contended that a well-balanced air force needed some fighters were bitterly scorned by the bomber boys.

The office of the chief of Air Corps adopted the slogan, "Fighters are obsolete," and funds for their development and procurement were greatly reduced.

All attempts to demonstrate fighter capabilities met with the same sort of rigged juries and ostrich-in-the-sand treatment the Air Corps as a whole was getting from the Army and Navy when it tried to prove the effectiveness of aerial bombardment. All sorts of fantastic and arbitrary restrictions were placed on fighters in maneuvers that were supposed to simulate honestly conditions of actual combat. We were barred from having warning-net stations within sixty miles of the bombers' target. Interceptions had to be made at least twenty-five miles away from the target. One year we kept a fighter on patrol over Wright Field to radio warning when the bombers began to take off. Instead of recognizing the value of fighters for long-range reconnaissance and the need for defensive fighters to deny the enemy aerial intelligence, the bomber boys had maneuver rules changed to ban our patrol. When real war came the only reconnaissance aviation the Air Corps had were half-trained National Guard squadrons flying obsolete planes. There was a frantic scramble for a long-range fighter that could double in brass for photo reconnaissance. More than 80

per cent of vital wartime intelligence came from aerial photos. Not until after the war did the air force get its first real photo plane—the controversial Hughes XF-11.

There were few fighter pilots willing to battle against the bomber tide for their cause. Among the most valiant champions of our cause were Harold H. George, who later had to defend the Philippines with a handful of P-36 and P-40 fighters and was killed in the crash of a transport in Australia; Millard F. (Miff) Harmon, who commanded the Seventh Air Force in the Pacific and was lost in a bomber crash at sea; and Larry Hickey, who fought in Africa and Sicily.

The tactical school was the crucible in which Air Corps policy was distilled. The fighter-bomber battle reached white-hot intensity in the white stucco classrooms at Maxwell Field. My principal opponents there were Don Wilson, Harold Lee George, and Ken Walker. This trio preached the bombardment gospel according to Douhet and considered fighters in the same dodo category as sausage balloons. George and Walker were later joined by "Possum" Hansell to make the Air Forces' top planning team during General Arnold's regime. They were planning the air offensive against Germany long before Pearl Harbor. However brilliant this plan was in many respects, it reflected their blind spot on fighters. Many a B-17 crew had to go down in flames under the gun and rockets of *Luftwaffe* fighters before the bomber radicals learned that bloody lesson. When the P-51's finally escorted B-17's all the way to Berlin, the original AAF planners must have been almost as amazed as Herman Goering. Ken Walker and "Possum" Hansell later tried to practice what they preached. Walker was killed flying an unescorted B-17 over Rabaul, and "Possum" lost five out of his six-plane B-17 formation attacking St. Nazaire, France, without the benefit of fighter escort. "Possum" limped home with one engine shot out. Less than two weeks after the Air Forces in England gave up unescorted daylight penetration of the Reich, Harold Lee George visited me at Fourteenth Air Force Headquarters in Kunming.

After lunch in my bungalow he remarked brightly, "Well, Claire, the air war in Europe has turned out just like I said it would back in the tactical school."

I choked with rage and stomped out of the room. If the Japs had had an air force left by the time the Superforts began bombing the empire in earnest, the B-29's would have had the same need for fighter protection despite their improved defensive armament.

At the annual tactical school faculty meeting Don Wilson would regularly move to have the fighter course dropped from the curriculum.



Oddly enough, only the vote of ground-force instructors and the calm, good judgment of air commandant John F. Curry saved it from the scrap heap for three years. The ground men supported me because they were interested in fighters for close support of ground troops and to protect observation engaged in regulating artillery fire. Finally, in the spring of 1936 Wilson's motion carried and the tactical school stopped teaching fighter tactics. I was given command of a service squadron at Maxwell but was recalled at the last moment to give a part-time course on fighters.

In the same year Luke Williamson and Billy MacDonald came to the end of their Air Corps road. Luke and Billy had learned to fly as aviation cadets and were commissioned second lieutenants in the reserve corps. After a year of active duty they automatically went on the inactive list. Both enlisted in the Army as sergeants, hoping to win regular commissions. In 1935 they had their last crack at a permanent commission. Out of four hundred applicants for fifty-two commissions, Luke and Billy stood third in total flying time and led the list in flying ability. Both had air-line transport-pilot ratings. However, neither had more than two years of college. When the list of new regular lieutenants was published the names of Williamson and MacDonald were missing. Luke and Billy are as good friends as a man can hope to have, and I have never seen finer pilots. I honestly felt they were the type of men we needed in the Air Corps, and I was as bitter as they were when the Army passed them by. The local newspaper, the *Montgomery Advertiser*, felt there had been discrimination against Luke and Billy because of their enlisted status and jealousy on the part of senior officers who lacked their flying ability. Every year when we appeared at the big air shows with our Trapeze act, the Army permitted Luke and Billy to assume their reserve rank as lieutenants without pay so the Air Corps would not be represented in public by enlisted men. When they returned to Maxwell Field, they donned sergeants' stripes again and got the tough flying jobs that the officers didn't care to tackle.

I threw official discretion to the winds and told the *Advertiser* for publication, "Williamson and MacDonald are outstanding pilots in any type of airplane. If we were to go to war and I were ordered to the front, I would choose these two men to accompany me into combat, and that is the highest compliment a combat formation leader can pay."

This was no idle boast. Billy and I fought together in China for three long years against the heaviest odds, and Luke served his second

combat hitch, after dropping paratroopers in North Africa, as chief of my troop carriers in China and time and again flew unarmed transports through Japanese flak to drop supplies to surrounded Chinese troops.

We decided to stage a farewell performance of the Flying Trapeze team at the Pan-American air maneuvers in Miami in January of 1936. Among the spectators at Miami was General Mow Pang Tsu of the Chinese Air Force, a man whom we were all destined to see again. I had also received letters from Roy Holbrook, a former Air Corps pilot at Brooks Field, who had gone to China as a flying instructor. Roy asked me to recommend a dozen American pilots for the Chinese flying school located at Hangchow, about a hundred miles south of Shanghai. I recommended Luke and Billy and a number of technicians. They bought up the remainder of their Army enlistment time and sailed for China in the summer.

By the time Luke and Billy were on the Pacific, my health was crumbling and my heart was no longer in the fight. The pace of my five years at the tactical school had been brutal—not a single day's leave, writing far into the night to bombard the service journals with articles exposing the Douhet fallacy, hard flying of the Trapeze routine in the morning, teaching, and battling the bomber radicals in endless arguments and field maneuvers.

I also served as member of the pursuit development board, and as president of a pursuit design board, I battled with Wright Field engineers against the trend toward multiseater fighters that provided interesting engineering problems but were useless for combat. Before the flight surgeon would let me preside over what turned out to be my final Wright Field meeting, he put me to bed for two weeks and fed me a diet of raw liver to gain sufficient strength for the trip. At that meeting we received a telegram from the Secretary of War, urging "most serious consideration" of a multiseater fighter that would serve equally well as a fighter, bomber, and reconnaissance plane, because it would be cheaper if one plane could perform all the functions of military aviation. It was this same type of penny-wise, pound-foolish type of thinking that forced the Air Corps to buy short-range Douglas twin-engine B-18 bombers instead of the longer-ranged Boeing B-17's because the War Department could show economy-shouting congressmen how many more planes they got for their money.

I argued against the multiplace, all-purpose airplane for five days. The young engineering officers had no ideas on its tactical employment but were fascinated with the intricacies of its construction. Exhausted,

I crawled back south in my obsolete P-12C single-seater while the Air Corps spent two million of the taxpayers' dollars for thirteen of Larry Bell's Aircudas. Their peculiar design made good newspaper art but proved impractical for a fighting airplane. They did their most valuable service as guinea pigs for student mechanics at Chanute Field.

My health was now so bad that I was restricted to flying two-seater training planes with a safety pilot in the front cockpit. I was transferred to Barksdale Field as executive officer of the 20th Fighter Group under Col. Millard Harmon and in the fall the flight surgeons grounded me completely and packed me off to the hospital.

Lying on a hospital bed in Hot Springs during the winter of 1936 and spring of 1937 there was ample time to look back over my forty-seven years and think about the future. It was obvious that I was going round and round and getting nowhere. Ever since my boyhood in Louisiana I have watched the eddies of the muddy Southern rivers as they boiled to life in the spring. Particularly on the Mississippi, where I have seen them smash a steamboat into kindling wood and drag a full-grown cypress down into their whirling vortex, these eddies have been symbolic.

All my life I have seen boyhood friends caught in the eddies of life and sucked under or whirled aimlessly about in ever narrowing circles—some as river gamblers, dead from gunshot wounds; others struck by yellow fever, which raged unchecked through the swamplands; and others still caught in the drudgery of trying to eke a living from cotton farming in a losing battle against palmetto root, bad weather, fluctuating prices, and the passing years.

Several times I have felt myself swirling in one of life's eddies and struck out desperately for open water and the main current of my ambitions. This time I knew that I would have to find something that would give me a chance to keep flying, to fight, and to prove my theories on tactics. When the Army suggested retirement I accepted the offer. Several aircraft-manufacturing firms made flattering overtures, but I had no urge to fly a desk.

Letters with Chinese postage stamps, bringing news of Billy MacDonald, Luke Williamson, and Roy Holbrook, interested me more. Nobody who ever served a hitch in Hawaii could remain unaware of the dynamics of what was then called "the Pacific situation" or of the inevitability of a showdown between Britain, the United States, and Japan. However, in the fat peacetime years it was as unpopular to discuss the realities of the Pacific as it is now to talk frankly about the Russians and their designs. Japan had been chewing away at

North China for four years, but nobody who counted thought it was any of our business.

From my friends in China came tales of mounting tension and turmoil. China was frantically trying to arm and organize for a showdown. Its fledgling air force was being torn between American and Italian influence and local graft. The American flying school was having difficulties. Mussolini was backing an official Italian aviation mission to corner the Chinese plane market. Madame Chiang Kai-shek was taking over leadership of the aeronautical commission to clean out graft and reorganize the air force. China looked like a channel out of the eddy.

Finally, through Roy Holbrook, who was then confidential adviser to the Central Trust Company of China, came an offer from Madame Chiang Kai-shek. Would I consider a three-month mission to make a confidential survey of the Chinese Air Force—terms: \$1,000 a month plus expenses, a car, chauffeur, and interpreter, and the right to fly any plane in the Chinese Air Force? I would!

At midnight, April 30, 1937, with my family settled on the shores of Lake St. John near Waterproof, Louisiana, I officially retired from the United States Army with the rank of captain. On the morning of May 1, I was on my way to San Francisco, China bound.

# 3.

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When the Dollar Line's *President Garfield* docked at Kobe in Japan, I quietly slipped ashore leaving my baggage to complete the trip to Shanghai. Billy MacDonald met me on the docks. The manner of his arrival gave me a graphic idea of the new world I was entering. Billy was traveling on a passport that listed his occupation as assistant manager of a troupe of acrobats.

As an instructor for the Chinese Air Force, Billy was *persona non grata* in Japan. Direct application for a visa at a Japanese consulate in China would have ended in a curt refusal or ensured the ubiquitous little fellows of the secret police on our trail. So Billy arranged a faked job as assistant manager of an acrobatic troupe already booked for a long tour of Japan. When sandwiched between the acrobats' passports, his visa was handled in routine fashion. He crossed with the troupe unnoticed and ostentatiously toured Japanese variety theaters with them until my boat was due. He ditched the troupe in Osaka and turned up to meet me in Kobe.

Our intentions in Japan were to reverse the role of the hordes of Japanese "tourists" who wandered over the United States with imitation German cameras, binoculars, and an unhealthy interest in harbors and airfields. We hired an open touring car and, with cameras concealed under our topcoats, set off to see the country through the eyes of experienced airmen gauging potential targets. Even a few days in those tiny crowded islands enabled us to cover a lot of ground. We filled notebooks full of data on building construction, industrial districts, shipping routes, and areas where industry seemed to be expanding with the suspicious speed of a military enterprise.

We toured the flimsy ant heaps of Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe and sailed down the Inland Sea, noting well the isolated and heavily industrialized islands that housed many of the new war industries. We stopped at Mojji and Shimonoseki—the biggest shipping bottlenecks in Japan

—and then sailed for Shanghai across the Yellow Sea. Our pictures turned out well but were only a beginning for any effective target folders. Much to my surprise, I found out four years later that our notebooks and pictures contained more information on Japanese targets than the War Department intelligence files. Washington intelligence on Japan was so poor that even after Pearl Harbor most of the pages in its secret manuals dealing with Japanese army and navy aircraft were blank. When Jimmy Doolittle wanted pin-point targets for his first Tokyo raid in the spring of 1942 he found War Department files useless. He had to get his information by personally visiting American business firms with prewar branches in Japan.

China was steaming in the humid heat of early June when we arrived in Shanghai. The foreign colony was basking in the smug twilight of extraterritoriality. Most of the “old China hands,” accustomed to draining wealth out of the interior for decades, mistook the placid air that hung over Shanghai for fair weather instead of the dead calm center of the typhoon raging all around. Although there were still scars of the 1931 Sino-Japanese fighting visible in Shanghai, war talk was thoroughly pooch-pooched, and conversation in the elegant foreign clubs was mostly of how “disturbances” in the interior were reducing profits. I didn’t listen to these conversations long before hearing more than one foreigner voice the hope that the Japanese would “teach the Chinese a lesson and restore some order to the country.”

In Shanghai I met the two people who really enlisted me in China’s cause—W. H. Donald and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. Donald was an incredible, ruddy, sandy-haired Australian who knocked about China for years as a newspaperman and consultant to various local war lords. Refusing to eat a morsel of Chinese food and scorning to learn the language, Donald knew China and the power politics of Asia as few men ever will. He began to play a vital role in China’s history when, as confidential adviser to Young Marshal Chiang Hsueh Liang, the boss of Manchuria, he transformed his employer from a dissipated drug-addict pawn in the hands of the Japanese into a leader so potent that the Japanese were forced to invade Manchuria and drive out the Young Marshal at bayonet point.

If the whole truth were ever told about the famous kidnaping of the Generalissimo at Sian during Christmas week of 1936, it would not surprise me to learn that it was really Donald who saved the day. He had been loaned to the Generalissimo by the Young Marshal some months before Sian, and not long after his arrival there by plane from

Nanking, the complicated threads of the situation were woven into the strong cords that bound China together in her first brief modern unity. It was a tragedy for all China in 1940 when Donald's attempt to rout reactionaries from their high places in the Kuomintang government failed, and he was banished from his place behind the Generalissimo's chair. Donald was an implacable foe of Oriental graft and inefficiency and, like all Occidentals who have tried to fight openly against it, often had the sensation of wrestling with a sponge-rubber statue that yielded easily to pressure but resumed its original shape as soon as pressure relaxed.

Donald readily grasped the decisive significance of airpower in modern warfare. He became one of my strongest supporters, because he felt the urgent need to build a strong Chinese Air Force while there was still time. It was Donald who introduced me to the inner circles of the Chinese government where the intricate wheels within wheels revolved. It was Donald who, through his ready access to the Generalissimo, carried my problems directly to the supreme authority, and it was Donald who mediated between Madame Chiang and myself during those nerve-racking prewar weeks when two short tempers flared. Without Donald's unstinting help and understanding I could have accomplished little in China and no doubt would have sailed home in disgust with a superficial Occidental contempt for the East.

Donald was caught in the Philippines when the Japanese storm broke over the Pacific in 1941 and spent three years in a Japanese prison camp, his captors remaining unaware of his identity. He returned to China after the war to write his memoirs. I saw him again in Shanghai when I returned to China as a civilian in the winter of 1947—just before he died. His health was broken by his prison years of semistarvation. Death was deeply etched in every line of his face. Yet he was outwardly cheerful and writing hard to the last.

One sultry afternoon Roy Holbrook appeared and drove me to the high-walled compound in the French Concession to meet my new employer—Madame Chiang Kai-shek. We were told she was out and ushered into a dim cool interior to wait. Suddenly a vivacious young girl clad in a modish Paris frock tripped into the room, bubbling with energy and enthusiasm. I assumed it was some young friend of Roy's and remained seated.

Imagine my surprise when Roy poked me and said, "Madame Chiang, may I present Colonel Chennault?"

It was the Generalissimo's wife, looking twenty years younger than

I had expected and speaking English in a rich Southern drawl. This was an encounter from which I never recovered. To this day I remain completely captivated. That night I wrote in my diary, "She will always be a princess to me." Since then I have worked with Madame Chiang through long years of bitter defeat and years of victory that now seem even more bitter because their promise of peace has not been fulfilled. I believe she is one of the world's most accomplished, brilliant, and determined women.

Despite her tremendous feminine charm, on that sticky Shanghai day Madame was all business. She had recently shouldered heavy responsibilities and much official scorn in tackling the tangled affairs of the Chinese Air Force, but she was determined to see it through. She wanted facts about the air force—unvarnished facts—and she wanted them in a hurry. I promised a full report in three months. Many of my notebooks later bulged with jottings from that survey but the Japanese were destined to ensure that the report was never made.

Madame wanted me to begin in Nanking. I picked up Billy MacDonald and two Douglas biplanes at the Hangchow flying school. C. B. Smith, an American mechanic, rode in the rear cockpit of my plane, and Colonel P. Y. Hsu, a former Y.M.C.A. secretary who served as my personal interpreter during my China years, flew with Billy. Flying to Nanking, I had my hand on a throttle again for the first time since the Air Corps grounded me the previous autumn. It felt good to be in the air again with Billy on my wing and a broad muddy river below that could easily have been the Mississippi instead of the Yangtze. But the brilliant green carpet below could come only from growing rice, and the web of canals and black slate-roofed villages reminded us that it was really China below and our noses were pointed for Nanking, capital of the China of Chiang Kai-shek.

In Nanking I began to understand some of the reasons for Madame Chiang's urgency. While Shanghai dozed in false security, Nanking boiled with political turmoil, reflecting the mounting tension in the countryside from North China to Canton. Students were demonstrating in the streets against the Japanese. From the north came reports of Japanese pouring smuggled goods into China and kidnaping or beating Chinese customs guards who attempted to stem the illegal flow. New demands called for the right to train Japanese troops on Chinese soil and garrison North China rail lines. In the South the anti-Japanese boycott flared anew.

In Nanking I also caught my first whiff of the corruption surrounding Chinese aviation. Aviation is strictly an Occidental export to the



Orient. The Japanese Air Force was founded by a French aviation mission before World War I. Chinese learned to fly from a conglomeration of English, French, Russians, Americans, and Italians. During the decades between wars almost every Chinese war lord of consequence boasted a few foreign-made airplanes and some foreign pilots to fly them against his foes.

Not until after the Japanese occupation of Manchuria and the first attack on Shanghai in 1931 did the Chinese Central Government think seriously about airpower. It became obvious then that Japanese seapower could easily cut off China's access to the outside world and equally apparent that an air force was China's only hope to neutralize enemy naval strength. T. V. Soong, Madame Chiang Kai-shek's older brother, took the lead in organizing the Central Government's military airpower. At his insistence, an unofficial American mission, headed by Colonel Jack Jouett, later president of the U. S. Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce, went to China to establish military flying schools on the American pattern and lay the foundations for the modern Chinese Air Force. Jouett and some twenty Air Corps reserve officers, including Roy Holbrook, set up shop in Hangchow in 1932 and began turning out Chinese pilots. Substantial orders for American training and combat planes, aviation gas and equipment followed the Jouett mission into China. The Jouett mission began to bog down in 1934 when the Americans refused to aid the Central Government in suppressing a rebellion in Fukien Province. The rebels were holed up in ancient thick-walled towns where nothing but air bombardment could blast them out. General Mow led the half-dozen rickety crates of the Nan-king air force in smashing great breaches in rebel city walls, paving the way for successful infantry attacks and giving Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek his first active interest in military aviation.

Chinese pique over Jouett's refusal to bomb the rebels coincided with an Italian effort to capture the growing Chinese aviation market. That same year Dr. H. H. Kung, brother-in-law and bitter rival of T. V. Soong, was on one of his perennial jaunts through Europe in search of credits, munitions, and any other assistance for China he could find. In Italy he was feted by Mussolini, who was then having trouble financing a large expansion program of the Italian Air Force. Mussolini responded to a casual after-dinner lament by Dr. Kung over the sad state of the Chinese aviation with an offer to "send some of my boys over to help you in your troubles." The "boys" soon grew to an official mission of forty military pilots headed by a General Scaroni

and one hundred engineers and mechanics who set up a factory in China to assemble Italian planes.

American influence faded after the arrival of the Italians when no official U. S. support was offered for the Jouett mission. Jouett returned to the United States at the expiration of his contract, and the Chinese took over the Hangchow school, retaining some Americans as flying instructors. It was this group that Billy MacDonald and Luke Williamson joined in the summer of 1936.

The Central Government's air force was strongly reinforced in 1934 by the mass desertion of the rival Cantonese government air force. Cantonese pilots simply climbed into their planes and flew to Nanking where they were rewarded with a promotion in rank and a place on the three-man commission for aeronautical affairs for their commander. The Generalissimo was pleased to get them but also disturbed by the ability of the Cantonese air force to fly their coop. New head of the Aero Commission was General Chow, a ground general who had had no previous aviation experience. He was an old and trusted friend of the Generalissimo. His main job was to keep the air force loyal and discourage any thoughts of deserting Nanking.

By the time I arrived in China, the Italians were in complete control of the Chinese Air Force and had cornered the Chinese aviation market. Italian military pilots swaggered around Nanking in full uniform. General Scaroni roared through the streets in a big black limousine, his uniform dripping medals and gold braid. The elaborate ceremony and flowery courtesy of the Italians impressed the Chinese more than the brusque efficiency of Americans. It was an excellent deal for the Italians. The mission cost them nothing since its expenses were paid out of Italy's share of the Boxer indemnity. Chinese orders for Italian military planes soared to many, many millions of dollars and helped finance expansion of Italy's aircraft industry, which was already preparing for war. Close official ties of the Italian officials with the Chinese high command gave Mussolini's henchmen a rare opportunity to play the Axis game and aid Japan. In contrast to the German military mission, then in China, the Italians did all they could to sabotage China.

Despite the tremendous flurry of aviation activity under the Italians, nothing was done that really strengthened the Chinese Air Force. The Italian flying school at Loyang was unique. It graduated every Chinese cadet who survived the training course as a full-fledged pilot regardless of his ability. This was in sharp contrast to the American policy of weeding out incompetents in early training and then only graduat-

ing the best students. However, the Generalissimo was pleased with the Italian method. Chinese aviation cadets were carefully selected from the top social strata, and when they were washed out at the American-style Hangchow school, protests from their influential families caused the Generalissimo acute embarrassment. The Italian method solved this social problem and all but wrecked the air force. The influence of this kind of training continued to plague the Chinese Air Force until the return to China of the first wholly American-trained Chinese airmen in 1942.

The Italian assembly plant at Nanchang was also a fraud. It turned out large quantities of a Fiat fighter that proved to be a firetrap in combat. The Savoia-Marchetti bombers were of such obsolete vintage that the Chinese could use them only as transports.

Italians were also responsible for encouraging some quaint practices by the Chinese Aero Commission. No plane was ever removed from the official roster for any cause. It could be a total wreck, scrapped for parts or completely obsolete, but it was still carried on the air-force rolls—all of which made for an impressive air force on paper. Another standard device was raising funds by popular subscription to buy a plane named after a city. The same plane was flown around to each subscribing community, where characters of the city were painted on the fuselage with great ceremony accompanied by a firecracker barrage. Where the purchase money went was anybody's guess. They, too, were carried on the padded air-force roster. As a result, when war came the Aero Commission roster listed five hundred planes but only ninety-one were fit for combat.

Final evidence of the Italians' sabotage, as far as I was concerned, was a survey of the Chinese Air Force they completed during the late spring—less than two months before the Sino-Japanese war began in earnest. The Italians recommended that the Chinese buy no more combat planes and confine their purchase to trainers. It was no coincidence that Mussolini later became the first officially to suggest that China accept Japan's peace terms or that Wang Ching Wei, the notorious Chinese traitor, use the Italian embassy in Hankow to maintain communications with the Japanese.

I was inspecting the unique Italian flying school at Loyang with the 100-per-cent graduation record when word reached me of the Japanese attack on the Marco Polo Bridge near Peking on July 7. I immediately wired the Generalissimo, offering my services in any capacity he could use them. There were three principal reasons for my action.

1. I never run from a fight.

2. After all the years of classroom argument and theoretical debate over my theories of air warfare, I wanted a chance to give them an acid test in combat.

3. I was convinced that the Sino-Japanese war would be the prelude to a great Pacific war involving the United States. I felt that the more I could learn about the Japanese and the more damage I could inflict in the early phases of the conflict, the better I would be able to serve my country eventually.

Two days later at Sian I received the Generalissimo's answer.

"Your voluntary offer of services gratefully accepted. Proceed to Nanchang. Direct final combat training fighter groups there."

Nanchang was a provincial capital on the edge of huge Poyang Lake, famous for its exquisite porcelain and blistering summer heat. The airfield was easily identified from miles away by the swirling dust clouds that always covered it. Occasional thunderstorms at night hardly laid the top layer of dust but turned the climate into a Turkish bath. Most of the time I felt like a steamed clam. Food in the Burlington Hotel where I lived was terrible. In later years when American air-force personnel complained about the food in China I always regaled them with tales of the culinary horrors of Nanchang and could honestly reassure them that nothing they were eating was quite as bad as the Burlington fare.

General Mow was in charge of the air force at Nanchang. Mow had learned to fly in Russia and was an excellent pilot. He is one of the most affable Chinese I have ever met. We disagreed over many matters but have managed to remain good friends. The evenings I spent with General Mow over cold beer and iced watermelon after hot, dusty, and discouraging days at the airfield are my only pleasant memories of Nanchang.

The Chinese had three fighter groups that were supposed to be ready for combat. One was equipped with Curtiss Hawk-3 biplanes that were principally used as dive bombers. Another group had Hawk-2 biplanes, while the third group had two squadrons of Fiats and one squadron of Boeing P-26's. The Boeing planes proved excellent in combat. It is another sad footnote on the development of American fighters that, while the Chinese fought in P-26's in 1937, four years later when the Japanese attacked the Philippines almost half of the U.S. Air Corps fighters available to meet them were still P-26's.

Combat training at Nanchang was a nightmare I will never forget.

There were a few American-born Cantonese and some graduates of Colonel Jouett's Hangchow school who were extremely competent. The rest, most of them Italian trained, were a menace to navigation. Fighter pilots supposedly ready for combat spun in and killed themselves flying basic trainers. A muddy field caused as many as five landing crack-ups in a single day. I noted in my diary, "The Chinese Air Force is not ready for war." It was a vast understatement.

While General Mow, Billy MacDonald, and I struggled with the Chinese fighter groups at Nanchang, China was turning into a seething cauldron of war fever. The midsummer sun scorched the dusty northern plains and steamed the humid Yangtze Valley to a boil, but the temper of the Chinese people waxed even hotter.

As the war fever mounted, the Generalissimo sat silently in his summer capitol high among the pines on Kuling—the Mountain of the Ox that rose from the west shore of Poyang Lake. He sat pondering the dilemma rapidly closing in on him, and like a good poker player, he was checking his hand before going into the final showdown. What he found was not encouraging.

China had the highest-ranking admiral in the world, who took precedence at all international naval gatherings, but he and his handful of gunboats anticipated nothing but annihilation from the then mighty Japanese fleet. The Generalissimo's German military advisers had given him one crack army of about eighty thousand men, completely equipped down to coal-scuttle helmets and goose step. This army was good enough to make provincial war lords think twice about a break with Nanking but it was hardly sufficient to tackle the well-equipped conscript millions of Japan. The Generalissimo also wondered about his fledgling air force, then not yet five years old.

General Mow and I were summoned to Kuling for a conference with the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang. We flew to Kiukiang where Mow hired a pair of sedan chairs for the long haul up the rocky slopes to Kuling. Apparently Mow had an inkling of what lay ahead. Sweat poured off his brow as fast as it flowed from the straining backs of the coolies carrying us.

Chiang received us on the screened porch of his one-story bungalow in the shade of a pine grove. Madame introduced me. He smiled and shook hands Western style.

Preliminaries dispensed with, the Generalissimo turned to Mow and in sharp staccato Chinese began to quiz him on the condition of the air force. Madame Chiang and I stood to one side as she translated for me.

"How many first-line planes are ready to fight?" Chiang barked at Mow.

"Ninety-one, Your Excellency," Mow replied.

Chiang turned turkey red, and I thought he was going to explode. He strode up and down the terrace, loosing long strings of sibilant Chinese that seemed to hiss, coil, and strike like a snake. Madame stopped translating. Color drained from Mow's face as he stood stiffly at attention, his eyes fixed straight ahead.

"The Generalissimo has threatened to execute him," Madame Chiang whispered. "The Aero Commission records show we should have five hundred first-line planes ready to fight."

Never in the eight years that I have known him have I seen the Generalissimo so mad. Finally, as his anger ebbed, he turned to me and asked in Chinese: "What does your survey show?" Madame interpreted.

"General Mow's figures are correct," I replied.

"Go on," urged Madame, "tell him all of the truth."

Thus encouraged, I went on to describe conditions as I found them. As Madame translated my remarks, the pace of the Generalissimo's striding slowed. I must have talked for twenty minutes when Madame signaled a halt. The Generalissimo abruptly left the porch and disappeared inside the bungalow. Mow retained his head intact. Madame got the authority she needed to oppose the Aero Commission, and I laid the foundation of a reputation for absolute frankness. That session at Kuling established the tone of my relations with the Generalissimo. He came to rely on me for bald facts no matter how unpleasant they might be, and he always allowed me to have my way if I could convince him whatever I proposed would help the war. In all my dealings with him that seemed to be his sole standard—whether it would help the war. He even allowed me to deal directly with Chinese Communists and other leaders of dissident factions when I convinced him it was necessary for the rescue of American pilots and obtaining target intelligence.

Chiang broke his official silence a few days after our conference in a speech warning that if the Chinese chose war it would be a long, bitter, and bloody struggle from which there could be no turning back. His policy was still to make minimum compromises with the Japanese and stall for more time to build up China's military strength and internal unity. It was not a popular policy. Soon after the Generalissimo left Kuling for Nanking, I received another summons to report to him. This time Nanking was at a fever pitch. Vendors were

hawking gas masks in the streets. Roofs of buildings and public busses were being painted gray. Students chanted, "It is better to be broken jade than whole tile." Newspapers roared, "Stand and fight; an end to compromise." Government employees were donating a day's pay to the National War Fund. Most significant of all, the leaders of every dissident faction in China were flocking to Nanking to see the Generalissimo. Donald and I were the only foreigners present at those historic meetings in the Nanking Military Academy, the same building where eight years later the Japanese signed their formal surrender in China. One by one the powerful leaders came in to see the Generalissimo and make their demands. There was Pai Chung Psi—Old Ironsides, the boss of the southwestern war lords and one of the ablest soldiers in China. He had consistently opposed the Generalissimo's anti-Communist campaigns and the Japs had given him an air force without cost in the hopes that he might use it against the Central Government. There were: Lung Yun, the one-eyed war lord of Yunnan; Yen Hsi Shan, the model governor of Shansi, who practiced his own brand of agricultural socialism; Yu Han Mow, round-faced representative of the Cantonese; Han Fe Chu, the boss of strategic Shantung Province; Feng Yu Hsiang, the famous Christian General; Ho Chien, governor of the Hunan rice bowl; Liu Hsiang, leader of then remote Szechwan; Tsai Tin Kai, flat-nosed leader of the famous Nineteenth Route Army, who had defied Chiang's orders not to fight the Japs at Shanghai in 1931; and Shi Ching Ling, leader of the Twenty-ninth Army then battling the Japs around Peking. Their stories were all the same as they stood before Chiang, bronzed faces glistening with sweat in the dim electric light.

"Lead us against the Japanese and we pledge our troops and loyalty for the duration of the war."

For the first time in modern history China stood united. The watery masses that had been so easily swayed by Japanese winds froze solidly into a block of unyielding ice. The tragedy of modern China is that that moment in Nanking was so brief.

By August 6 the conferences were over and the die was cast for war. The Generalissimo spoke briefly, announcing that China would yield no more even if it meant fighting inadequately prepared and to the death. The air force was already on the move north, where the heavy fighting was expected. We were to be based at Kaifeng, a key railroad junction on the Yellow River. This broad river was the only natural barrier between the Japanese around Peking and the Chinese capital of Nanking. I was back in Nanchang preparing to move with

the fighter groups when Madame Chiang sent me an urgent summons to meet her in Kiukiang on her way from Kuling to Nanking. My trunk with all my clothes had already left in a Savoia transport for Kaifeng, leaving me with only a pair of khaki shorts, a green polo shirt, and a plaid cap for my meeting with Madame Chiang. Madame was greatly agitated. She had word the Japanese were preparing to occupy Shanghai. Shanghai was the key to the Yangtze Valley and all China, and if the Japs made a move in Shanghai, the Chinese would have to fight. She said the Generalissimo's crack German-trained army was already on the way to Shanghai.

"You must go to Shanghai immediately and warn American officials to evacuate their nationals and protect their property before it is too late."

I pointed to my shorts and green polo shirt—hardly a costume for an emissary. Madame thrust a handful of money at me.

"Buy new clothes. But get to Shanghai as fast as you can."

Julius Barr flew me to Nanking in the Generalissimo's personal plane. I caught the night express for Shanghai, leaving Nanking just a few hours after the last Japanese civilians. All along the Yangtze, Japanese civilians were rushing to get under the protection of Japanese guns at Shanghai before the storm broke. In Shanghai I bought a white suit and shoes, standard summer attire for foreigners, and set out for the American consulate, a harbinger of disaster. After waiting an hour I was permitted to see some minor functionary who was quick to pooh-pooh my warning and assure me that there was not the slightest chance of war in Shanghai. Didn't I know that all the skirmishing had been in the north?

I wandered down to the China National Aviation Corps offices and tried it again on H. M. Bixby and my old instructor, Ernie Allison. They were highly amused. They gave me permission to recruit pilots from their personnel if there were a war, but of course there would be no war. Next call was the Fourth Marine barracks where the commandant, Colonel Buck, was polite but firm—there would be no war. It was the same all over Shanghai. I found only one foreigner who would believe my tale—the Swedish minister, Baron Beck-Fries. He left a tea party where I had passed on Madame Chiang's warning to warn his nationals and alert the Swedish Legation. After the Japanese attack he sent me a fine silver pocket flask in appreciation of the warning.

On Wednesday I saw Japanese warships arriving in the Whangpo River from the naval base in Kure, but nobody seemed excited. That



night I took the train back to Nanking, wondering if Madame had been excited over nothing. Halfway to Nanking the train was stopped and all civilians ejected. Chinese troops piled aboard, and the train started back toward Shanghai. I felt a little more confident. Several more trains were commandeered for troops before I finally managed to crawl aboard one that went all the way to Nanking.

Meanwhile Madame Chiang, who had not heard from me for two days, was worried and imagined the worst. She sent Billy MacDonald to Shanghai in a Douglas two-seater to fly me back. He landed on Hungjao airdrome on Thursday morning. "American" Lee, the field manager, rushed out and waved him off.

"Get out of here with that plane. We killed a Jap officer and soldier on the field last night. Fighting has begun in the city."

Billy ignored the warning, borrowed Lee's car, and drove around the city trying to locate me. Mobs of Chinese were storming the international and foreign concessions, seeking safety. Native quarters were deserted. He flew back in the afternoon and reported me missing just before I walked into Madame Chiang's office.

There was a big war council meeting in the Nanking Military Academy the next night—Friday, August 13. As usual, Donald and I were off to one side with Madame Chiang translating. The Japanese threat to Shanghai forced the Chinese to ignore the fighting in the north. Because they had fought the Japanese to a bloody stalemate at Shanghai in 1931, the Chinese military leaders felt they stood a better chance there than on the northern plains where the mobility of the Japanese tanks and armored cars would weigh heavily against Chinese infantry.

A message came in to the Generalissimo. He read it, handed it to Madame Chiang, and spoke to the council.

Madame sobbed in English, "They are shelling the Shanghai Civic Center. They are killing our people. They are killing our people."

"What will you do now?" I asked.

She brushed away her tears, threw back her head proudly. "We will fight."

The meeting broke up in a rush of preparations for battle.

Some units of the air force had already flown back from the north and were stationed around Nanking. Madame Chiang asked me what they could do on Saturday. I recommended dive-bombing and high-level-bombing attacks on the Japanese warships that were providing enemy infantry with heavy artillery support. Madame Chiang suddenly discovered that there wasn't a single Chinese air officer who

knew how to plan and organize a combat mission of any size. She asked me to take over. Without a moment's preparation and only the vaguest knowledge of the two opposing forces, I found myself planning my first combat mission. After twenty years of practicing for war I was finally playing for keeps. Billy Macdonald and I drove to Chinese Air Force headquarters and stayed up until 4 A.M., poring over maps and planning the missions. Unknowingly we were setting the stage for Shanghai's famous Black Saturday—a spectacle that shocked a world that was not yet calloused to mass murder from the sky by thousand-plane raids or atomic bombs.

I decided to send the Curtiss Hawk dive bombers against the Japanese cruisers and the Northrop light bombers against Japanese naval headquarters, then aboard the heavy cruiser *Idzumo*, which was anchored in the Whangpo opposite the Japanese consulate at the edge of the International Settlement.

The true story of what happened that tragic day has never before been told. Chinese bomber crews had been carefully trained to bomb at a fixed air speed and an altitude of 7,500 feet. Their orders were to avoid approaching the *Idzumo* over the International Settlement as we all recognized that there was too much tinder in those polyglot streets ready to flare into an international incident that would damage the Chinese cause. Weather over Shanghai was bad for high-level bombing. Rather than turn back in an abortive mission, the Chinese pilots went on down below the overcast to make their bomb runs at 1,500 feet in a shallow dive that boosted their air speed above their accustomed bomb run. They violated orders to avoid the International Settlement and failed to adjust their bomb sights for the new speed and altitude. As a result their bombs fell short of the *Idzumo* and smack into the middle of the International Settlement. Two 1,100-pounders hit in the busiest block of Nanking Road, the main thoroughfare. One was a dud. The other killed 950 people of various nationalities and wounded 1,150 more. The destruction of that single 1,100-lb. bomb in the middle of a crowded city should have been a warning to the world, along with the earlier German thermite fire-bomb attack that razed Guernica in Spain. But it made only a brief splash of headlined horror and was quickly forgotten by all but the survivors. Other bombs shattered glass of the U.S. cruiser *Augusta*, but that day the *Idzumo* escaped damage.

I was up early in the morning after only a few hours sleep and took off from Nanking as a neutral in an unarmed fighter plane to watch the attacks on Shanghai. Soon after leaving Nanking, I ran into

lowering ceiling and dodged rainstorms as I flew down the Yangtze Valley. I had about given up hope of breaking through to Shanghai when I spotted a flight of three Chinese planes reforming over the river and another trio climbing fast. Below them I saw a warship going full speed with white spume curving off her bow, thick black smoke pouring from her stacks, and guns flashing like tiny matches struck along her gray decks. The Chinese planes had been dive-bombing and came close enough to make the unknown sailors uncomfortable. I dived down to identify the ship. By that time she was throwing up a tremendous smoke screen. I came up low behind the smoke, pulled up for a quick look, and saw, amid the flashing of her machine guns, a huge Union Jack painted on the afterdeck. It was the British cruiser *Cumberland*. I made another run through her fire for positive identification and then headed full throttle for Nanking. I knew another international incident was brewing. Flying back I had time to observe bullet holes in my wings.

Landing at Nanking I pointed out the bullet holes to C. B. Smith and my armament specialist, Rolfe Watson.

"Get some guns on this ship and get 'em on in a hurry," I roared. Next time somebody shot at me I was going to shoot back.

## 4.

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THE tail end of a typhoon lashed Shanghai on Sunday with heavy wind and rain, giving the bleeding city a chance to lick its wounds while the air war shifted to Nanking. Japanese heavy-bomber groups were based in northern Formosa. On Black Saturday their first mission blasted the Hangchow flying school while the Japanese radio boasted that Nanking would be next and warned foreign diplomats to evacuate the Chinese capital.

The speed with which the American embassy staff heeded the warning highly amused the Chinese. When the first sirens sounded, the entire American diplomatic contingent dashed madly for the water front where U.S. Navy gunboats waited with steam up to carry this precious cargo out of harm's way. In all fairness to Ambassador Nelson Johnson, he had strict orders from the State Department to avoid the combat zone. Had he been so careless as to be nicked by a Japanese bomb, I am sure Washington would have cabled him a severe reprimand for creating an international incident and forcing the striped-pants brigade on the home front to deal with a war they were trying desperately to ignore.

Several American newspapermen drove up from Shanghai to see the Japanese make good their threats. I offered them a spot in our observation post atop the Metropolitan Hotel and promised an exciting show. We had barely finished lunch when sirens announced Japs on the way from Formosa. The hotel roof gave us a grandstand seat. We could see the gray city stretched out below, the green turf airfield beyond the massive city walls, and the gleaming white tomb of Dr. Sun Yat-sen at the foot of Purple Mountain. It was a warm, muggy day with a wafer-thin layer of clouds hanging at 5,000 feet. Chinese fighters, patrolling above the clouds at 10,000 feet, sounded like fat bees circling honeysuckle.

Japanese bombers came in from the north—eighteen twin-engine

single-tailed planes that broke formation as they emerged from the clouds and raced eagerly toward their target. They came in over the city singly with machine guns chattering and tracers arcing in all directions. Watching them roar over us at less than 2,000 feet, I got my first sight of those immense red balls on their silvery wings that so astonished every Allied airman when he faced them for the first time in the air. The Jap attackers exuded confidence in their tactics and contempt for the defense.

The Japs bombed the empty airfield and vanished, climbing into the clouds homeward bound and unscathed. Newspapermen turned to me in disgust. As I was trying to explain how the overcast screened the Jap attack, I heard the roar of engines pushed at full throttle and heavy machine-gun fire. By the time we reached the hotel lobby, Chinese Air Force headquarters was telephoning a claim of seven bombers shot down. Correspondents were skeptical so we piled into a car and sped to the airfield. In the first mile beyond the city wall we saw thick black gasoline smoke billowing from three burning bomber wrecks. The newspapermen were convinced and raced back to Nanking to file their stories. I continued and counted eight crashed bombers. Chinese fighters had been patrolling the eastern approaches to the city. As the Japs broke out on top of the clouds, heading eastward toward Formosa, they ran into the circling fighters and disaster.

Actually, the Chinese were reasonably well prepared for this type of attack. During the last weeks of July, I organized an air-raid warning net in the Shanghai-Hangchow-Nanking triangle to protect the capital. An Australian communications engineer, Commodore Austin Malley, helped me put an old Maxwell Field plan into action by utilizing telephone and telegraph facilities.

During the last days at Nanchang, Billy MacDonald and Luke Williamson selected the best of the Chinese fighter pilots for special training in tactics against bombers. The Japanese had read old Guillo Douhet's books and believed every word of them. We knew the Japanese bombers would come in without fighter escort. Japanese strategists shared the same contempt for defensive fighters that my colleagues at Maxwell Field had. We were pleased to prepare some positive proof that General Douhet, the Japanese, and my old friends, George, Wilson, and Walker, were wrong. Luke and Billy trained the Chinese to hit the bombers with our Flying Trapeze tactics of three fighters concentrating on a single enemy plane. One fighter was to come in from above, another from below, with the third plane in reserve to press home a final attack. Chinese pilots were taught to

ignore the bomber's fuselage and aim at engines, where any misses would splatter into gas tanks buried in the wing roots.

The bombers came back to Nanking three times in five days. When the smoke cleared, the Japanese were minus three of their best bomber regiments—fifty-four planes and crews. Forty charred wrecks were found in China. The remainder probably succumbed to battle damage and crashed in the Formosa Straits trying to get home. That was the end of unescorted daylight bombing in China.

While the Japs prepared for their next move, we frantically threw together a defense against night bombing. The Generalissimo transferred all antiaircraft artillery and searchlights to the air force where I could control them. In a single day General C. C. Wong, Chinese flak commander, moved dozens of his big Sperry searchlights from clusters around Nanking into a new grid pattern to cover all approaches to the city. Wong was a German-trained artillerist and one of the best soldiers in China. He had a precise, analytical mind that was quick to grasp the implications of any shift in strategy. For nine years we worked together on the air defenses of China and despite an incredible lack of transportation, equipment, and trained personnel, Wong never failed to deliver what we needed.

While Wong was moving his lights, I lectured a small group of picked Chinese pilots on night-fighter tactics I had worked out at Maxwell Field. Many sleepless nights of practice over Alabama with Coast Artillery Corps searchlights against old Keystone bombers had convinced me the tactics would work.

This was long before radar. Planes were poorly equipped for night flying, much less night fighting. Everything depended on a pilot's eyes. The idea was to spread searchlights in a grid pattern covering the target area and start the lights searching at their extreme range to pick the bombers up as far away from the target as possible. Once the bomber was caught in a light, the ground crews could pass it from light to light as long as it stayed within the grid pattern. By cruising well below the bombers' altitude, fighters could spot the enemy planes silhouetted in the searchlight beam. Bomber crews would be blinded if they tried to look down into the lights. It was the old surprise attack out of a blinding sun inverted and transferred to a nocturnal setting. Many times I had rocketed up the searchlight beam like a monkey on a stick, so close to the bomber that ground crews were sure we collided. I could press these attacks to within fifty feet of the bomber's unprotected belly without detection by blinded crews.

Whether I could get these ideas across to Chinese pilots via black-

board and interpreter was another matter. I noticed one earnest Chinese pilot named Liu scribbling furiously in his notebook. After each session he plied me with dozens of detailed questions through my interpreter. Liu turned out to be my star pupil. In his first two nights aloft he shot down three Jap bombers—a feat equaled by only one American pilot in China—Johnny Alison, who got a Distinguished Service Cross for his performance. Liu was killed a few months later fighting against odds over Nanking.

The Japs gave us three days to prepare. The third night they came straggling in singly and in pairs until dawn. Most serious damage was to our sleep. The Japs escaped without loss. The second night Liu shot down one bomber. The third night the Chinese bagged seven out of thirteen Japs. That was the end of night bombing. It was nearly the end of me, too.

Jerry Huang is a huge, jolly Santa Claus of a man with a Ph.D. from Columbia University and a flare for entertaining foreign visitors to China. Jerry later fed and housed all Americans in China with his War Area Service Corps. In 1937 he was practicing for the job by shepherding me and my entourage. The day before night bombing began, Jerry announced he had located an extraordinarily fine billet. He moved us out of the Metropolitan Hotel into a luxurious palace, prominently perched high on a hilltop. Our quarters were superb, but the place seemed strangely underpopulated when we returned each night after a long day at the airfield. The first two nights a few bombs fell nearby, but we ignored them. The third night we had just stepped outside to watch the evening's fireworks when one Jap pilot unloaded his stick of bombs across one side of the palace. A few seconds later another stick boomed to cross a lethal T through the building. Billy and I were flattened in a blast of flame, concussion, and flying steel. In the morning we could see the walls where we were standing, pock-marked with shrapnel.

Jerry came to visit the field, bubbling over with a tremendous joke he couldn't wait to explain. It seems the Japanese bombers were out to exterminate the Generalissimo, but Jerry had foiled them. All day the Generalissimo held forth in the palace on the hill, giving the impression he lived there. All foreign visitors were received in the palace. Japanese spies had faithfully reported its location. However, every night the Generalissimo secretly moved to a small cottage concealed in a pine grove several miles away. We had been living in a well-baited booby trap.

Night bombing with 50-per-cent losses was too expensive for the

Japs. They left Nanking in peace for nearly six weeks while they revised tactics. I imagine there must have been some lively debate in Japanese staff colleges on the Douhet doctrine. When the Japs came in again in early October, they sent 9 bombers escorted by 27 of their best fighters. Their monoplane (Type 96) fighters shot down 11 out of 16 Chinese fighters. Bombers did their job molested only by flak.

Stung by their initial losses over Nanking, the Japanese officially demanded that all American airmen leave China. The State Department seemed only too happy to comply with the Japanese demands by trying to oust not only my group but also American pilots who worked for C.N.A.C., a civilian transport firm.

When the first request for American flyers to leave China reached me, I noted in my diary, "Guess I am Chinese."

I ignored repeated written warnings to leave from Consul-General Clarence Gauss (later ambassador) in Shanghai. Finally, Gauss threatened to send the United States sheriff of Shanghai to arrest and deport me under armed guard. Gauss also intimated a court-martial and loss of citizenship were in store for me. I informed Gauss, through mutual friends, that I would be delighted to leave China after the last Jap departed. One morning, soon after these exchanges with Gauss, I was driving to my office near the airfield when Chinese guards with fixed bayonets halted my car about a mile from the field. They went over my papers with a fine-tooth comb despite the rapid-fire expostulation of my interpreter, Colonel Hsu. Every hundred yards the process was repeated until we finally reached my office. Colonel Hsu was dispatched immediately to find out what was up. He was gone all day and finally reported he had to go through channels all the way up to Generalissimo's office before he was told that the troops were to protect me from being annoyed by "foreigners." I discovered later that Donald had gotten wind of Gauss's threats and was making sure that no United States sheriff could serve me a warrant.

Often we played a little farce on the same subject with Ambassador Nelson Johnson at the Nanking Country Club, where we lived after leaving Jerry Huang's booby trap. Johnson frequently arrived for dinner with the Russian and Italian ambassadors about the time Billy MacDonald, Rolfe Watson, C. B. Smith, and Harry Sutter, my Swiss radio expert, were returning to our quarters from the airfield. The scene would go like this:

"Who are those men?" Mussolini's henchman would ask pointedly.

"They look like Russians to me," was Johnson's standard reply.



"I know all Russians in Nanking," chimed in the Russian envoy. "They aren't Russians. Who could they be?"

We always waited upstairs in our rooms until the diplomats left the club before coming down to the dining room. I dined with Johnson and junior members of the embassy staff several times but officially I was always "somewhere in the interior."

My official disappearance from Nanking, following Gauss's threats, gave rise to a number of rumors back in the States. Talk that I was fighting under an assumed name infuriated me most. I wrote the following letter to the *Montgomery Advertiser*, of Montgomery, Alabama, to let my Maxwell Field friends know where I stood. I have not changed these sentiments.

China has long regarded the United States and American citizens as the only great power and people who are really disinterested in their friendship and sympathy [for the Chinese people]. As a result of this feeling we have gotten a large share of China's business despite high prices and cash on the barrel head policies.

China is now [September 1937] fighting the war of all the Pacific nations—believe it or not—and the Chinese people cannot understand the actions of American officials and private citizens who hurriedly departed when the Japanese butchers began their operations at Shanghai.

I am curious to know why I am accredited with serving under an assumed name. Is it thought that I fear to reveal my hate of war and aggression under my real name? I have no apologies to offer for my 20 years of service in the Air Corps nor do I hesitate to take responsibility for my feelings with regard to the imperialistic designs of the Japanese and their murderous attacks on a peaceful people. I assure you, you can always address me by my true name.

Luke Williamson succumbed to official pressure, compounded by his wife, and returned to the United States to fly with Delta Air Lines. A few C.N.A.C. pilots left, but the bulk stayed on to brave Japanese bullets and the worst flying weather in the world to keep Free China in touch with the rest of the world.

My official status in China was always a subject of speculation. Actually, I was civilian adviser to the secretary of the Commission for Aeronautical Affairs—first Madame Chiang and later T. V. Soong. Until I returned to active duty with the United States Army in the spring of 1942, four months after Pearl Harbor, I had no legal status as a belligerent and held no rank other than retired captain. Even while I commanded the First American Volunteer Group in combat, my

official job was adviser to the Central Bank of China, and my passport listed my occupation as farmer. During the four years I worked for the Chinese government, I never had a written contract. The Generalissimo's word was his bond. Every year, without exception, I was actually paid more than my terms called for.

Although on many occasions I directed combat operations of the Chinese Air Force, I never issued an order. Everything was "suggested," often with an endorsement by the Generalissimo requesting compliance "without fail." Later I learned that "without fail" on the Generalissimo's orders meant that the penalty for failure was a firing squad.

Although I was generally well prepared for most of the combat facing me, I still shudder when I think of the host of unexpected problems that suddenly confronted me: pilots who refused to bail out of crippled planes because returning without their plane meant losing face—I couldn't convince them their lives were more important than their face; building runways without engineers or machinery; headquarters that took two days to write air-combat orders, with each copy laboriously hand painted with brush and ink; teaching artillerymen who had never shot a duck to lead a moving target in the air; wrestling with a firing squad for the lives of pilots who had inadvertently disobeyed orders—the Japanese were killing them fast enough without any help; and blunting the keen edge of my American impatience on the unyielding stone of Chinese imperturbability. Many times I was discouraged, disgusted, and ready to quit. Each time it came to a decision, I elected to stay. All my life I had been fighting every fight to the finish, and I knew I would have to see this one through. For many days during the first weeks of war the only entry in my diary was, "Bah!"

There was little enough encouragement in the fighting through the fall. The Japanese quickly established complete air superiority over Shanghai. Their carriers lying off the muddy Yangtze River mouth provided a constant fighter screen. Bombers shuttled over the front from Chusan Island, Woosung, and Point Island—all within fifteen minutes' flying time from their targets. Chinese planes were badly outclassed by the Japanese equipment over Shanghai.

We concentrated on dawn and dusk missions to avoid losses until I taught one fighter group a night dive-bombing technique. Dimensions of a Japanese destroyer were outlined on Nanking airdrome with kerosene lanterns. Coming in at 3,500 feet—the dead space too high for light flak and too low for the heavy shells—I taught them to wait

until the target appeared under the trailing edge of their wing, then cut throttle, pull up into a fast wingover ending in a vertical dive, and begin counting. At the count of 15 they released bombs, flattened out, and made a full throttle getaway as close to the ground as possible. It took about three dry runs to convince the pilots they could pull out with a safe margin. Then they went to work on Jap shipping in the Yangtze.

As the first Chinese pilots approached, the Jap ships identified themselves perfectly, opening up with searchlights and flak. The Japs invariably looked too high and only once spotted a dive bomber long enough to knock it down. We pounded the Japs along the Yangtze almost every night until the fall of Nanking, but they never diagnosed our tactics. As far as I know, this was the world premiere of night dive-bombing.

Chinese pilots hit the old *Idzumo* one night with three 500-pounders, starting fires and a secondary explosion. Before dawn the smoldering *Idzy* was towed out to sea by tugs. Three days later it supposedly returned to its old berth in the Whangpo, looking suspiciously fresh and undamaged. I was sure we sank the original *Idzumo*, and the Japs sent its twin sister ship to save face. Both were identical battle cruisers taken from the Russians in 1904. At the end of the war a nose count of the Jap Navy showed the alleged *Idzumo* sunk in the mud at Kure but no record anywhere of her sister ship.

Our Northrop light bombers were sent to Canton to operate against the Japanese Navy blockading the coast. The Japanese had a fierce pride in their navy. I hoped that if we battered some of their prize ships they might relax the blockade, and China might be able to get the aviation supplies needed so badly from the United States. The Northrops bombed as far as fifty miles off the coast and sank a few destroyers and merchantmen as they worked back up toward Shanghai. Fighters shot down all but Squadron Commander Chen. He took off from Hankow alone one morning and was shot down about twenty miles from Nanking. The fate of the Northrops was typical of Chinese squadrons in those dark days. With inferior planes and training and without replacements they were doomed to early extinction.

When the Japs returned to Nanking in October with swarms of monoplane fighters buzzing around their bombers the jig was up. The Chinese with guts to fight were shot down like flies. When the rest scuttled and ran off full throttle, skimming the rice paddies, I really couldn't blame them. While the Japanese were sending a hundred planes a day over Nanking, Madame Chiang repeatedly risked her life

by coming to the airfield—always a prime target—to encourage the Chinese pilots, for whom she felt responsible. It was strong medicine even for a man—the grim and hopeless manner as they went off to face ever lengthening odds, the long nerve-racking waiting, and the return of bloody, burned, and battle-glazed survivors. It always unnerved her, but she stuck it out, seeing that hot tea was ready and listening to their stories of the fighting. Early one morning Madame Chiang joined us to watch a night dive-bombing mission return from Shanghai. She was obviously pleased when all eleven planes were sighted over the field. Flying weather was perfect as they circled to land. Her joy was short-lived. The first pilot overshot and cracked up in a rice paddy. The next ground-looped and burst into flame. The third landed safely, but the fourth smashed into the fire truck speeding toward the burning plane. Five out of eleven planes were wrecked landing and four pilots killed.

Madame Chiang burst into tears. "What can we do, what can we do?" she sobbed. "We buy them the best planes money can buy, spend so much time and money training them, and they are killing themselves before my eyes. What can we do?" She had witnessed a demonstration by some of the Italians' prize pupils from the Loyang 100-percent-graduation school.

Nanking took a terrible pasting as enemy troops drew near. The Japs swarmed in with high-level bombers, dive bombers, and fighters, turning the overcrowded city into a charnel house. The country club on the slope of Purple Mountain commanded a bird's-eye view of the city stretched out in the Yangtze Valley. Every morning at breakfast the conversation centered on "when will they come in today?" Chinese were always up at the crack of dawn trying to do a little business before the bombing began. Stores were crowded. Streets were filled with the clang of ricksha bells, shouting coolie porters, bicycles zigzagging through traffic. Jammed busses thundered through the streets. Streets were full of the rich blend of smells from curbside restaurants, wine-shops, steaming noodle vendors, and sticky sweetshops. Silken banners announcing bargain sales fluttered in the breeze, and the loud cacophony of Chinese music blared from phonographs in shops. Whining German-made sirens sounded the first alarm. Business ended with a clatter of shop shutters rattling down. A roaring tide of humanity coursed through the streets toward bomb shelters and overflowed out into the open country beyond the city.

As we drove to the airfield, the streets were empty and silent with an air of quivering anticipation. At the field, staccato engine coughs

and full-throated roars marked the Chinese fighters taxiing and zooming off, and then the field, too, grew silent, joining in the strained waiting for the bombers.

Second alarm was sounded by sirens, gongs, bells, and bugles. There was a note of urgency in the frantic clanging. Down the valley a tethered donkey brayed. More strained silence and a faint buzz of approaching heavy-engine noise. The drone grew in a crescendo. We swept the sky with binoculars. White puffs of flak gave a clue to the bombers' location. The last seconds of life ticked off for hundreds of people below.

*Chinese fighters pitched into the Japs. Enemy fighters brushed them off as dogfights exploded all over the sky. The bombers turned. We knew their bombs were away and watched the ground. Geysers of flame, smoke, and earth vomited up from the city. Columns of dust slowly ascended. Tongues of flame lashed out of the city's silhouette. More bombs. Windows rattled from concussion. Fine showers of dirt rained down. Flak puffed all over the sky in a desperate attempt to hit the bombers. Flames gathered into roaring fires, eating into flimsy wood and bamboo districts. The dust clouds grew and rose like a gigantic tombstone over the dead and dying. Sirens sounded the all clear. Down the valley the donkey brayed. All clear until the next raid.*

I saw some strange sights in the sky above Nanking. A Jap fighter shot through the brain in the middle of a loop froze onto the controls, looping over and over and over until he hit the ground. Chinese rapid-fire .37-mm. flak pumping away at a string of dive bombers hit two in a row, erasing them in a puff of gas, bombs, and planes that left a blank patch of sky in the formation where the planes had been an instant before. A heavy flak shell exploded under the tail of a Jap bomber flipping it over on its back. Fire broke out along the wings. Both engines fell out. The crew bailed out but two chutes caught fire, falling like blazing comets with fiery tails. Newsreel men ground happily away for the edification of American theatergoers. The cameramen said the pictures were better than those of the Germans and Italians over Madrid and Barcelona in Spain the year before. I also saw much of this holocaust from the air. Just before the outbreak of fighting at Shanghai, the Curtiss-Wright people exhibited their latest model at Nanking—the Hawk Special—a trim, fast monoplane that was to be manufactured in the United States as the Air Corps P-36. I fell in love with the Hawk Special the first time I flew it and asked Madame Chiang to buy it for my personal plane. She paid Curtiss-Wright \$55,000 for the plane.

It was in the Hawk Special that I got my first taste of Jap flak and fighter tactics, and that I learned some of the lessons that later saved many an American pilot's life over China.

The difference between Japanese and American equipment was crystal clear in the air over the Yangtze Valley. Japanese had feather-weight monoplanes and twin-float seaplane fighters that sacrificed everything else for incredible maneuverability. In a turning, tail-chasing dogfight they were poisonous. Even then it was evident that Japan was thoroughly committed to building planes as expendable items, counting on a short combat life and depending on production for replacements rather than on field repair and maintenance to put damaged planes back into action.

My Hawk was built ruggedly with maneuverability sacrificed for heavy firepower, durability, and diving speed. To get the last mile of straightaway speed we stripped the Hawk of every bit of the non-essential "hardware" so dear to American manufacturers. Since there were no air-to-ground communications in China, the radio was removed, and I generally carried my thick, heavy bedroll in the radio compartment directly behind the pilot's seat. On more than one occasion when I unrolled this pack for the night, Japanese bullets fell from the blanket folds.

Surviving ten months of combat and operational flying under the roughest field conditions, the Hawk Special finally met an ignominious end in a ground loop caused by a ham-handed American test pilot. The cowling had been bent by Japanese bullets and the test pilot was taxiing out for a trial hop with the repaired cowling when he wrapped up the Hawk on the ground.

Japanese pilots of the early vintages were well trained and cockily aggressive. They were good mechanical flyers but lacked the individual initiative and headwork called for when their original plans went awry. They had been blooded against Russians and Chinese in the early Manchurian skirmishes and were polishing their combat techniques during the one-sided battles over the Yangtze Valley. Survivors of this experience later led the swarms of Zero fighters and Mitsubishi bombers to sweep the Pacific in 1941-42, victorious everywhere except over Burma where the First American Volunteer Group opposed them.

These veterans fought well together and had a bulging bag of tricks. A favorite trick was to leave one pilot of a trio foundering in sloppy acrobatics while his mates waited in ambush, generally hiding above in the blinding sun. A luckless Chinese pilot who snapped at this bait

had two Japs shooting up his tail before he got within range of the decoy. Another maneuver involved a string of Japs looping continuously like a revolving wheel in a squirrel cage. Enemy pilots were lured into the squirrel cage by what looked like an easy shot. As the planes raced round and round, one Jap would detach himself from the formation and come back to shoot the enemy off the top of the loop in a head-on attack. It was a beautifully flown and precisely timed maneuver. I saw more than one pilot potted as he came up to the top of one of those mad loops. Japanese tactics were well tailored to fit both planes and pilots. The Hawk Special acquired some bullet holes much too close for comfort as I learned very, very early in the game that trying to turn with Jap fighters was non-habit-forming.

Since the stripped-down Hawk was the fastest plane in China skies, we used it extensively for reconnaissance. Billy MacDonald, Peter Mow, and John Wong, a slim, malarial U.S.-born Cantonese pilot who shot down 13 Japs and was later Chinese air attaché in London, flew the Hawk in addition to myself. We searched for Japanese carriers and fleet units off the coast, spotted troop movements and checked enemy airdromes. Billy MacDonald located the *Ryukaku* one day off the Yangtze mouth for Chinese dive bombers, who gave this carrier first taste of its eventual fate in the Battle of Midway in 1942. We proved the value of aerial reconnaissance so effectively that an entire Japanese fighter group based near Shanghai was ordered to concentrate on destroying the Hawk Special. They flushed the Hawk many times, but it always got home. Not all the Jap fighters were so fortunate. Many times I went aloft in the Hawk to umpire air battles over Nanking, Nanchang, and Hankow and found that umpire-baiting was as popular in China as it is in Brooklyn. Again, the baiters paid a price.

October was a dismal month. The final Chinese effort to drive the Japanese out of Shanghai failed. This offensive was directed by strapping Walter Stennes, a big blond German who was a confidential military adviser to the Generalissimo. Stennes commanded the Generalissimo's bodyguard and personal air-transport squadron. Stennes wanted a night attack so the Japanese would be unable to use their heavy artillery. By getting every flyable plane into the air the Chinese Air Force was able to give five full minutes of preliminary bombardment during the fading light of dusk, just before the Chinese troops jumped off. Stennes and I had synchronized our watches two days before the attack but everything came off according to schedule. In a wild night of hand-to-hand fighting, the Chinese pushed the Japanese marines and sailors back to the Whangpo River's edge, and for a few

bloody hours the Japanese grip on Shanghai was slipping. However, the Chinese lacked both the reserves and ammunition to sustain their efforts and the offensive failed.

While driving to the Shanghai front after the offensive, Madame Chiang was critically injured in an automobile crash. Her Mongol driver, distracted by low-flying planes, missed a sharp curve in the road and piled the open touring car into an irrigation ditch. Madame Chiang never fully recovered from those injuries. At the time, they were so bad she had to give up most of her official duties including her aviation responsibilities.

The Chinese Air Force also came to the end of its rope in October. Of the eighty fighters that began the fighting, less than a dozen were left. Many of the best pilots were dead. The remainder were an endless chain of moving ducks in a shooting gallery. They might survive one dash through the Japanese marksmen, but inevitably they would have to come around for another bath of lead. It was just a question of time.

With the failure of the Shanghai offensive and the end of any sustained air effort, the Chinese knew they were in for a long and bitter fight. "Informed foreign opinion" in the treaty ports was unanimous that the war would be over in three months with a complete Japanese victory. When I saw the Chinese plans for the retreat to the west unfold I gained new admiration for these people and their leaders. They knew that the loss of Shanghai would mean eventual loss of the whole Yangtze Valley and they planned to retreat two thousand miles up the Yangtze into the mountain-ringed Szechwan basin, which no invader in four thousand years had been able to penetrate. Even the Mongol horsemen of the great khans had to *bypass Szechwan when they extended their conquests as far south as Burma*. Although part of the government was moved to Hankow, the real goal of the exodus from Nanking was Chungking, capital of Szechwan. The Chinese always knew that Hankow was merely a way station along the uncharted trail to Szechwan. As the Jap armies surged toward Nanking, the Hawk Special was the principal source of information on their progress, making daily patrols along the railroad that guided the enemy advance. Early in December we could hear the sound of artillery in Nanking, and everybody knew the end was near. The Italian aviation mission left China by request after Mussolini became the first officially to urge the Generalissimo to accept Japanese surrender terms. The Generalissimo ordered me to leave Nanking two days before the city fell. Despite Japanese shelling,



he stayed one more day with that quiet stubbornness that made him always one of the very last to leave his falling capitals. I went out to the bomb-cratered airfield at midnight to gas and warm up the Hawk for flight. The sound of its roaring engine momentarily drowned out the angry growling of the guns, hourly growing louder. I taxied out to the end of the runway in the dark and waited with engine idling and hand on throttle for the first faint streaks of dawn to break over the city wall and light my take-off. The air-raid warning net had crumbled before the Japanese armies. Enemy fighters were on the prowl. Shells were bursting near the field. As I roared over the city wall, the sun was just beginning to rise, casting a pink glow over the stricken city, which gradually changed to a prophetic bloody red.

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WHILE American diplomats were busy prodding American airmen out of China, the Red Air Force arrived. The Russians sent four fighter and two bomber squadrons completely staffed and equipped to fight the Japs in China. They arrived in the fall of 1937, before the fall of Nanking, and stayed for a year and a half, leaving just a few months before the European war reached the shooting stage in the fall of 1939.

Soon after Japan attacked at Shanghai, the Chinese sent an official call for help to all the major powers. Only Russia responded. The Russians didn't pause to play partisan politics or trip over ideological folderol when their national interests were at stake in China. All of the Soviets' aid went to the Central Government of the Generalissimo. The Russians had had no love for the Generalissimo since the 1927 split when he drove the Russian-supported Chinese Communists from the Kuomintang and slaughtered them by the thousands. For nearly twenty years he fought a ruthless war of extermination against communism in China. The Russians sent their aid to the Generalissimo solely because he represented the strongest and most effective force opposing Japan and they supported him exclusively, ignoring the Chinese Communist Armies, which badly needed external support. Japan had been preparing an attack on Russia for twenty years, and unnumbered shooting rehearsals had been held along the Siberian border. The Russians were willing to help anybody who was fighting and weakening Japan.

When Japanese bombs at Pearl Harbor blasted American officialdom into more than an academic interest in China, we would have done well to study Russian policy in China. Thus the United States might have avoided many of the tragic errors that turned American policy in China into a powerful ladle stirring anew the witches' broth of Chinese disunity and civil war.

The Russians gave China a twenty-million-dollar credit, about four hundred combat planes in addition to the Russian squadrons, and antiaircraft artillery. Russians set up flying and artillery schools for the Chinese and opened an overland supply route from the railhead in Russian Turkestan over the ancient silk caravan route through Sinkiang to northwestern China. Although little publicized, this road actually carried more war materials into China than the famous Burma Road. When the Japanese move into Inner Mongolia threatened this supply line, the Russians moved an armored division and a squadron of bombers into Sinkiang to protect their route to China. The Japanese advance halted well short of engaging these forces. From the outbreak of war in the summer of 1937 to the end of 1942, the bulk of China's foreign aid was Russian. It always seemed significant to me that the Japanese never bothered with formal protest to Russia over the presence of an armored division and six Red Air Force squadrons in China while bombarding the United States and Britain with a barrage of diplomatic blackmail. Russian aid to China came during a period when the United States was selling scrap iron and *high-octane aviation gasoline to Japan in large quantities for eventual delivery in the bomb-blasted cities of Free China.*

The Russian squadrons were regular Red Air Force units commanded by their own officers and complete with ground crews and Russian supplies. A General Asanov commanded this expeditionary force in China and worked with the Chinese Generals Mow and Chow and myself in planning operations. Professionally we got on very well. Socially the Russians kept to themselves in hostels, similar to those that later housed all American personnel in China. Jerry Huang's War Area Service Corps built a chain of Russian hostels all the way from Hami in Sinkiang to Nanking. Russian hostels had their own guards and were well supplied with vodka and Chinese prostitutes. Off duty the Russians enjoyed themselves riotously. No Chinese town that had quartered Russians ever complained in later years about the boisterousness of the American Air Forces.

On duty the Russians enforced iron discipline. In contrast to the American custom of standing alert duty lounging or playing poker in an alert shack, the Russians sat stiffly all day long in their cramped cockpits. They parked their planes in a circle around the field. When the air-raid warning sounded, they took off madly in all directions. I never saw a Russian scramble that failed to produce at least one collision. On several occasions I elected to take my chances against enemy bombs on the ground rather than participate in one of those

wild scrambles. Russian pilots were tough and determined with a tremendous vitality. They could combine twelve-hour alerts, bitter air combat and all-night carousing to a degree I have never seen remotely approached by other breeds. They were considerably older and more mature than American pilots and had never heard of combat fatigue. They wore civilian clothes but retained their Red Air Force rank and got an automatic promotion on their return to Russia. Most of their pay was kept in Russia pending their return.

Their combat behavior was unpredictable. Some days they just decided not to fight and scuttled off full throttle over the treetops. When they decided to fight they did so with the teamwork and tenacity of ants, swarming over the Japs and overwhelming them with sheer determination. Like the Japanese, the Russians had an overfondness for rigid air discipline that often backfired when something happened to their leader. The Russians took one of their worst lickings on this score when the Japs sent a wave of fighters to precede bombers attacking a Russian field. The Russians took off into the midst of the Jap fighters and were heading for a hot fight when their leader was hit in his engine and turned out of the fight to land. The entire Russian fighter group turned and followed him down. The Japanese bombers appeared just after they landed and smashed the Russians into a bloody pulp. Generally, though, the Japanese avoided a field where they knew the Russians were based.

Some of the best dogfights I have ever seen were between Japanese and Russians over Nanking and Hankow. Russian fighter planes were the I-15 biplane, an improved version of the Boeing P-12 with double the power and four machine guns synchronized to fire through propeller blades, and the I-16, a short stubby monoplane that was all engine and a rough copy of Jimmy Doolittle's famous Gee Bee racer. The biplanes and monoplanes supplemented each other in combat; the I-15 was used for maneuverability and the I-16 for high-speed work. After the odd assortment of American, Italian, German, and French planes the Chinese accumulated in prewar years disappeared in combat, Chinese pilots flew Russian fighters and bombers for more than two years until United States lend-lease planes began to reach China in the summer of 1942.

Nine Japanese biplane fighters came over Nanking to drop surrender leaflets one afternoon. Five Russians and one Chinese pilot took them on. The Japs sent one Russian down in flames and the Chinese pilot scuttled for safety, leaving four Russians against nine Japs. The remaining Russians fought off the Japs for twenty minutes in a master-

ful exhibition of defensive tactics. Neither side claimed a victim and the main fight was broken off to watch an epic encounter between a Russian and a Jap who had separated from the melee and staged a duel I will never forget. The average air battle reaches a decision in a matter of seconds or at the most a few minutes, but this dogfight went on for thirty long, grueling minutes with the lives of both pilots hanging on every movement of their sticks.

The Jap could turn inside the Russian, and they began with tail-chasing circles that brought the Jap closer and closer to firing position. With the Jap's first shots the Russian broke away in a dive, and the Jap followed him down. In the middle of his screaming dive the Russian did a snap roll that shook off the Jap and gave him a quick shot. The Russian plane is the only one I have ever seen that could hold together in that maneuver. They did every acrobatic trick in the books but always came back to the Jap turning inside the Russian and that incredible snap roll in a power dive. They both ran out of ammunition and broke off. I was at the field when the Russian climbed out of his cockpit. He was six feet tall, had a shock of hair like ripened wheat. His shirt was glued to his back with sweat, and he looked as though he had come out of a shower. Blood oozed from a bullet wound in his leg. This Russian was later killed in Europe while commanding a Red Air Force P-40 group against the Germans.

In another Nanking battle one Russian took on three Japanese and got shots into all of them before they finally shot him down.

The Russians also delivered the *coup de grâce* to one of the worst defeats the Japanese ever suffered in the air. After the fall of Nanking, Hankow was the main target of the Japanese Air Force. We were certain that in the spring of 1938 they would welcome an opportunity to celebrate Emperor Hirohito's birthday with a smashing blow at the Chinese provisional capital.

A powwow including the Russian commanders, Mow and Chow, some of the Generalissimo's aides, and myself assembled in Hankow to write the script for the Emperor's birthday show. The Japanese had been having some rough going against the Russians over Hankow and were not too regular in their visits. To encourage them to come in on Hirohito's birthday (April 29), we ostentatiously stripped Hankow of its fighter defense. All Chinese and Russian planes took off with great fuss on April 28, circled the city at low altitude so everybody would hear and see the formations, and then flew a course toward Nanchang. Japanese agents, who were as thick in Hankow as

bedbugs in a country inn, reported the exodus before the planes were out of sight.

An hour's flight from Hankow the fighters turned back and slipped into the Hankow field at treetop level and landed in the fading twilight without the usual circling. Billy MacDonald and I climbed to the roof of the tallest building in Hankow. We couldn't hear or see them return.

Air-raided sirens sounded at breakfast the next morning. The warning net reported fifteen bombers on the way from Nanking and a large fighter formation coming up the river from Wuhu. The Japanese based their fighters at the advanced field at Wuhu to stretch their gas supply to get them over Hankow, allow for limited combat, and get them back. It was always a tight squeeze for the Jap fighters to make it back to Wuhu. On this day we planned to make it even tighter. Twenty Chinese pilots flying Russian planes were patrolling the southern approach to the Hankow airdrome with orders to engage the Jap fighters for as long as possible to burn up their gas. Our main force of forty Russian fighters was lazily doing figure eights about thirty miles east of Hankow on the direct Hankow-Wuhu course, primed to ambush the Japs when their gas was low, and they couldn't stay and fight.

The Japs fooled us on their approach swinging far to the south and swinging in over Wuchang to plaster the airfields before the Chinese fighters hit them. The Japs weren't anxious to fight long. After a few minutes I saw Jap fighters break away from the fight and waggle their wings as a signal to reform the formation and head for home. The Chinese shot down a few bombers but the enemy formation sailed on out of sight in good order and relatively unhurt.

I chuckled as I saw them sailing serenely on course to Wuhu and thought of the forty Russians circling in the sun and waiting like a flock of vultures.

The Russian attack was perfect. Their first onslaught separated the fighters from the bombers. While one group slaughtered the bombers, the other chased the fighters and hacked them down. The Jap fighters didn't have enough gas left to turn and fight. Three bombers escaped but not a single fighter got back to Wuhu. The Sino-Russian score for the day stood at thirty-six out of thirty-nine. Four Chinese pilots and nine planes were lost. The Russians lost two planes and no pilots. That night the Japanese radio cheerily announced that fifty-two Chinese planes had been shot down over Hankow to celebrate Hirohito's birthday.

The Russians used China as a proving ground for their equipment and tactics against the Japanese just as they had in Spain against the Germans and Italians. Squadrons were rotated every six months to spread experience through the Red Air Force. Major modifications in their machine guns and gunsights resulted from their China combat. I am sure that the lengthening of their gun barrels and improvement in the accuracy of their sights later cost the life of many a *Luftwaffe* pilot over Europe.

One tactic for which the Russians later became famous germinated during their China experience. Very early in the war I was impressed with the incredibly light construction of Japanese fighters. I was astonished that I could tear the aluminum skin of an enemy fighter with my fingers. In lecturing to the Chinese pilots I stressed the sturdiness of their planes compared with the Japanese and recommended that if they were ever in a tight spot to lock their heavily braced wings with the Jap fighter, open full throttle, and they would undoubtedly tear off the Jap's wing while retaining their own. I had conducted experiments of this type during my Air Corps days, practicing by using a fixed landing gear to knock off an adversary's wing or tail, and I was convinced these measures would work in a combat emergency.

A serious-minded pilot named Yuen quizzed me at great length on this tactic, and one day he got a chance to try it. Three Japanese Navy bombers were giving the Nanking forts trouble, so we sent Yuen and three others to shoot them down. Yuen's guns jammed on his first pass, so he tried to ram. The bomber banked to give its gunners a shot at Yuen and locked wings. The navy bomber was an old-style heavily braced job, and its heavy wing tore through Yuen's lower wing, sliced off his tail, broke the oil lines, and sent him tumbling down in a spin. Yuen managed to get down, making a forced landing with his oil gone and his engine temperature skyrocketing. He showed up at my office the next morning with a patch over his eye and a sad reproachful look.

"You told me to ram and it would be all right," he said bitterly.

"I said you would be all right ramming monoplanes. You picked the heaviest-built plane in Japan," I retorted.

Several other Chinese pilots used the ramming tactics successfully, sheering off a Jap fighter's wing with little damage to their own plane. Years later Parker Dupouy, an A.V.G. pilot, clipped a Zero over Rangoon with his P-40 wing. He lost three feet of wing but the Zero wing sheered off at the roots and killed the pilot. The Russians were extremely interested in the ramming technique, particularly since their

short-barreled machine guns made it necessary to get within fifty feet of a Jap before firing. With the advent of steel propellers they changed the technique to chewing off the enemy's tail with their propeller and used this tactic successfully against the Germans.

Russian bombers were twin engine SB-2 and SB-3. They were too lightly armed and couldn't carry much of a bomb load but they had one feature that baffled the Japanese. Exhaust stacks of their radial engines were turned up above the wing instead of below the wing as in conventional models. When they flew at high altitudes it was impossible to hear them because most of the engine noise was diverted upward. One day they bombed the Yangtze port of Kiukiang from 24,000 feet. The Japs sent fighters to meet them at 17,000 feet. First indication of the bombers' presence was explosion of bombs below. The Japanese radio complained bitterly that night that the Chinese "are now using invisible, noiseless bombers."

Russian bombers made the first raid on Formosa in May of 1938 shortly after Chinese pilots in Martin B-10's earned the honor of being the first Allied pilots over Japan. I worked with the Russians on the Formosa raid, picking as their target an aircraft assembly plant at Taihoku.

The only time I had any difficulties with the Russians occurred during a conference with General Asanov and General Chow on the field at Nanchang. Conversation was trilingual with three interpreters stretching simple chatter on the weather into a half-hour harangue. While we were talking the first air-raid alarm sounded. Russian planes warmed up and took off. I saw the second red ball hoisted but neither Asanov or Chow showed any signs of taking cover. I suggested to Asanov through our interpreters that we leave.

"Oh, no, I cannot go until Chow does or I will lose face," he replied.

I suggested to Chow that we leave.

"Oh, no, I cannot go until Asanov does or I will lose face," Chow replied.

"Tell them both I'd rather lose face than my life," I shouted at my interpreter, Colonel Hsu, leading a mad dash for the graveyard that served as a local air-raid shelter. In this same graveyard I had another close call. I was standing on top of a grave mound watching a dog-fight above and missed seeing the bombers drop their load. The blast knocked me off the mound on top of General Chow.

My years of air combat in China before the United States entered the war gave me an excellent opportunity to observe and compare the combat pilots of the major Pacific powers. It was during this grim



period that I developed my faith in Chinese as airmen, a faith that was later proved time and again by their performance in the air. The first Chinese to fight in the air suffered from terrible training, inferior equipment, and faced overwhelming numerical superiority every time they fought. Even with all these handicaps there were some Chinese pilots who turned in memorable performances.

Art Chen was a husky from Oregon, of Cantonese parentage, who had returned to China to fight. Art had learned to fly in California and was an excellent combat pilot. He was one of the first Chinese pilots successfully to ram Jap monoplane fighters. In a fight against heavy odds near Hankow he was trapped by four Jap fighters. Unable to escape the deadly loop attack, he deliberately rammed the Jap leader as he came in for the kill. Both planes burst into flames but Art hit the silk safely. The three remaining Japs kept him busy slipping his chute as they fired many bursts at him on the way down. He was wounded and slightly burned, yet when we found him he was directing the salvage of the precious machine guns from his wrecked plane.

With a grin he held up one of the guns and turned to me, "Sir, can I have another airplane for my machine gun?"

In another fight over Nanning a year later, his plane was set on fire but Art flew the blazing crate twenty miles to avoid bailing out over Jap-held territory. His burns were so severe that he spent the remainder of the war in hospitals. He finally returned to China to fly for C.A.T.C.

Colonel Hsu (not to be confused with my interpreter although their names are similar) came to the Chinese Air Force from C.N.A.C., where he was a copilot before the war. Some of the regular Chinese Air Force pilots sneered at the "transport pilot" during Hsu's early months with the C.A.F. Eventually he rolled up one of the finest Chinese records of the war. He flew many bombing missions in the old Heinkels, Northrops, and Martins and led the first air raid on Japan in February 1938. His Martin B-10 could not carry a bomb load to Japan so Hsu and his mates dropped leaflets on Nagasaki to tell the Japanese people that "the China incident" was far from closed. The Japanese were totally unprepared for enemy planes, and the cities were brightly lit as Hsu strewed his leaflets.

One package of leaflets bounced around Hsu's cockpit and became wedged between the control column and the floor, sending the bomber into a steep dive. Hsu eventually worked the package loose and regained control of his plane. He returned to China through bad weather and was talked into a Chinese airfield by Lt. Henry Lee, an

American-born Chinese, who was the only Chinese radioman to stay on duty at a field during air raids. Lee later won his wings and did liaison work with the Fourteenth Air Force. Hsu became Chinese commander of the Chinese-American Composite Wing of the Fourteenth Air Force during the closing year of the war. He was present at the C.A.C.W. base at Chihkiang in the summer of 1945 when Japanese emissaries arrived to surrender all Japanese troops in China.

Gow was a bullet-headed Mongol who spoke no English but fought with the tenacity of a mastiff. He shot down four Japanese bombers in his first two fights and was killed by bombs while taking off to meet another bombing attack.

Captain Chen looked too small and nervous to be anything but a fighter pilot. Actually he was an excellent bomber leader. Chen never dodged a mission, complained about the lack of fighter cover or "had trouble finding his target."

His invariable greeting to me was, "I await my orders."

He led one of the most successful early Chinese bombing raids, hitting Tientsin's port of Taku where the Japanese had a major supply base for their North China operations. After his group commander turned back because of engine trouble, Chen took over leadership of the formation and struck the port, completely surprising the enemy and setting fires in the warehouse and dock area. The fires burned for days and consumed thousands of tons of enemy supplies.

Colonel Sun, another bomber pilot, flew one of the strangest missions in my knowledge. He was leading a flight of Northrops against Taku when his engine threw a propeller and he was forced to make a crash landing in a rice paddy. Sun covered his plane with rice straw and then ran afoul of two hundred Chinese puppet troops working for the Japanese. Sun delivered a patriotic speech on the shame of their activities and persuaded the puppets to join the regular Chinese Army. He arrived in Nanking several weeks later, leading 200 men and an airedale dog he also found in enemy territory.

The air battles over Hankow whittled down the last of the good Chinese pilots who began the war. As the supply of Chinese pilots diminished, Madame Chiang began to consider seriously the flood of offers she was receiving from foreign pilots who professed a desire to fight for China. The idea of a foreign legion of the air in China had been fermenting for some time. Dr. Kung had first proposed it at the time of the Japanese attacks in 1931. Colonel Jack Jouett opposed the project on the grounds that it would interfere with a sound ex-

pansion program for the Chinese Air Force, and the matter was dropped.

When Madame Chiang again proposed the idea in the fall of 1938, I threw more cold water on the project because the task of separating the capable pilots from the flock of would-be soldiers of fortune seemed hardly worth the effort. However Bill Pawley, then an aviation salesman in China, turned up with a group of Vultee bombers that interested me. The Vultees were slow and carried a three-man crew but had better than 2,000 miles' proven range. I was desperate for a long-range bombing outfit to carry out the mission of the extinct 14th Squadron against enemy shipping off the China coast.

I secured the loan of Julius Barr and Royal Leonard, two former flying pupils of mine who were then personal pilots for the Generalissimo, to find the best bomber pilots in the motley mob available.

We hired a weird collection of four Frenchmen, a Dutchman, three Americans, and a German and filled out the squadron with six of the best Chinese bomber pilots. I planned to use the foreigners as flight leaders. When the Chinese pilots learned of this, they refused to fly on the ground that they would lose too much face following a foreign pilot. Their exit was followed by a sympathy strike of the Chinese bombardiers, who were also officers. Our sole survivors were the rear gunners, who had been recruited from the Chinese ground armies. They were enthusiastic about flying—they didn't have to walk and carry their guns, and there was plenty of ammunition to shoot. I sent my armament specialist, Rolfe Watson, up the Yangtze to Ichang to set up an aerial gunnery school for them while I wrestled with the pilots.

Watson had been gone a week when I received a telegram saying, "Field under water. Students not arrived. What shall I do?"

I answered, "Bail out field, recruit students, and carry on."

There were some good pilots in the International Squadron. Jim Allison had fought the Germans and Italians in Spain; Gibson had completed U.S. Air Corps training; Weigel was an enthusiastic graduate of a cow-pasture flying school; and a fellow named Schmidt claimed to have flown with the Finns. But the prize was a downy-cheeked young lad who exhibited a stack of logbooks in which he had listed a total of twelve thousand hours' flying time. He claimed he had flown in Alaska, South America, and Europe and said his current ambition was to fly a bomber to Tokyo. At that time after twenty years of intensive flying my logged time in the air was still a little

short of ten thousand hours so I was somewhat skeptical of the young man's qualifications.

I gave Billy MacDonald a wink and told him to check out our aspiring young hero on a basic trainer.

As Billy and the boy walked out to the flying line, he stammered to Billy, "Well, you see I've never been checked out on these planes before."

Billy grinned reassuringly and told him, "Don't worry, it's easy. As a matter of fact these planes are so easy to fly, I won't even bother to give you a check ride. Just climb in and take it up solo."

The Tokyo bomber stopped at the cockpit, turned pale, and confessed, "I guess I better not. I've never flown a plane before."

The big troubles of the International Squadron were not in the air but on the ground—specifically in an unsavory thoroughfare of Hankow called Dump Street and inhabited chiefly by barkeepers, opium peddlers, and prostitutes. The International aces established their field headquarters on Dump Street and subsisted almost entirely on high-octane beverages. Well lubricated, they would tell any and all who would listen all they knew about Chinese Air Force operations and a great many things they didn't know.

They flew some missions against the Japanese rail centers in North China and successfully bombed some bridges, but the security leaks via Dump Street were so bad that the Chinese began to feel the results were not worth the cost. About the same time I planned a mission against a large Japanese troop-movement center at Tsinan in Shantung Province. It was to be an early-morning mission, so to save bother and get a longer sleep, the International crews gassed and bombed their planes the afternoon before the raid. There must have been plenty of talk on Dump Street because the Japanese came in on the slanting rays of the setting sun and laid their bombs across the flight line where the bombers were parked. One hundred-pound bomb exploded under a parked bomber's wing and set off the gas and bombs in a tremendous explosion that touched off the entire row of bombers.

What was left of the Chinese bombing force vanished in five seconds of flame and dust. With it went the jobs of International Squadron pilots.

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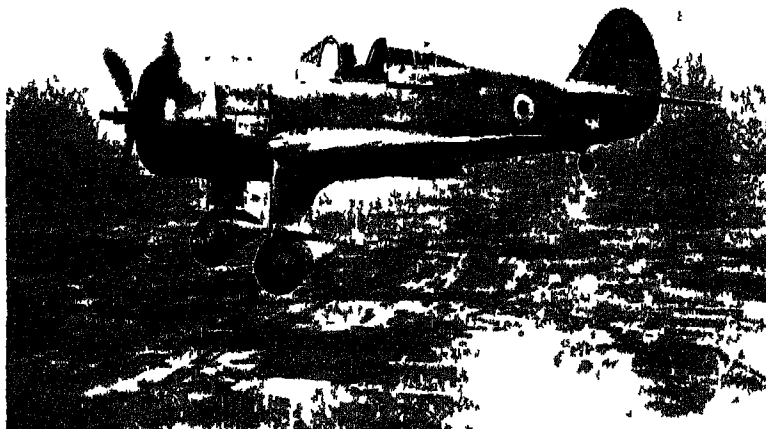
YUNNAN is a slice of the medieval world nestling in the heart of Asia. It is a land of jade-green lakes set in bare burnt-ocher hills on mile-high plateaus, topped by snowy crags that climb up into the world's loftiest ranges. Yunnan is squeezed into the farthest corner of southwest China. Only vague and unmarked frontiers mark its borders with Tibet, India, Burma, and Indo-China.

Although the advent of modern communications was mainly a result of the Sino-Japanese war, Yunnan has been a crossroads and battleground of central Asia since ancient times. Marco Polo traversed the old Jade Road through Yunnan, which led Peking jewelers to the fabulous jade mines of Mogaung in northern Burma. The armored elephants of the Burmese kings battled Kubla Khan's mounted Mongol archers over the plains around Lake Tali seven centuries ago. Yunnan was one of the farthest outposts of the Manchu Empire. Chinese soldiers spent hundreds of years in futile attempts to subdue the Yunnanese tribesmen in a prolonged Oriental version of our own Indian wars.

Yunnan was best known to the rest of China for the spice of its hams; the purity of the copper and tin from its mines, which furnished metal for the bulk of the empire's small-change, hole-in-the-center coins; and the ferocity of its swart Lolo tribesmen, who still dwell unconquered in uncharted mountains, periodically raiding the cultivated valleys for salt, women, and horses. During the Manchu dynasty, Yunnan was a catch basin for exiles from the Imperial Court at Peking. Its governors were generally the youngest princes, whose older brothers wished them far from the center of court intrigue. The provincial government was staffed with soldiers, scholars, and officials whose offenses in Peking were grave but not of sufficient gravity to merit the finality of the headsman's ax. To Yunnan's capital of Kun-



A.V.G. battle plans are discussed by Chennault at Kunning with Squadron Leaders Avid Olson (left) and Robert Sandell.



The Curtiss-Wright Hawk type of fighter flown by Chennault against the Japanese in 1937-1938.





Chinese building a Fourteenth Air Force bomber field in West China.

ming, these exiles brought the beautiful architecture of Peking, fragments of which still remain.

I came to Kunming in the summer of 1938 as an exile from the air combat then raging over the middle Yangtze Valley. I was spurred by direct orders from Madame Chiang to begin the seemingly hopeless task of forging a new Chinese Air Force from an American mold. Madame Chiang had never forgotten those nerve-racking days at Nanking when the Italian-trained pilots splattered themselves over the airdrome. She brought ever increasing pressure on me to give up combat and tackle the training problem. When it became evident that I would have to yield to this pressure, I applied for a return to active duty in the U.S. Air Corps, even though it meant a substantial cut in pay. I had a full year of combat under my belt, during which all my own theories and those of my tactical-school colleagues had been given an acid test. It seemed to me that this experience could be applied faster and more fruitfully in training American airmen than in trying to hatch a Chinese phoenix in the mountain-ringed hinterlands. The Air Corps replied officially that, for 1938, there were "no funds available for the return of retired officers to active duty."

As a result I settled in Kunming, the city that for the next seven years was to be my main base of operations and the closest thing I had to a home. When I first came to Kunming, it was a sleepy, backwoods Oriental town with a thin Gallic patina. The French had pushed a meter-gauge railroad up from Indo-China, across the tremendous Yunnan gorges to Kunming, and used the cool, dry, and invigorating climate of the Kunming Plateau as a refuge from the steamy heat of their colony. During the summer Lake Kunming was dotted with their champagne-stocked houseboats. Life in Kunming and its environs had changed little with the passing centuries. Squat brown tribesmen crowned with faded blue turbans carried on the provincial commerce, driving pack-mule caravans loaded with salt, tin, and opium over narrow mountain trails. Creaking, ungreased pony carts rattled and groaned over Kunming's cobbled streets. Water buffalo, cattle, and herds of fat pigs were not uncommon sights between the pepper trees lining the main thoroughfare. Here and there the alien lines of a French villa loomed incongruously out of a welter of sooty tiled roofs and lofty olive-green eucalyptus trees. The shrill peanut whistles of the miniature French locomotives mingled with the singsong of Chinese street vendors and clang of ricksha bells.

Outside the city, the heavy clay soil blossomed into the brilliant green of young rice each spring, growing to maturity under the



drenching monsoon rains. During the mild sunny winter, wheat, soybeans, and bright yellow mustard flowers covered the same soil. Along the byways fields were filled with snowy white blossoms of the forbidden opium poppies. Despite the official ban against poppy cultivation, opium remained Yunnan's principal export.

The Chinese training school was located on the edge of a green-turf airfield between the city and the lake. Across the lake a landslide had left a sheer red-rock precipice on one side of the tallest peak in the vicinity, a perfect landmark, and a sight that became as familiar as Old Baldy to more than a hundred thousand Americans as they entered and left China by air. A small group of American Air Corps reserve officers were recruited to staff the Yunnan school. They were a lusty crew—excellent airmen, vociferous grippers, and dangerous men around a poker table. In addition to Billy MacDonald there were: Johnny Preston, who specialized in precision outside loops in Fleet trainers; Frank Higgs, immortalized by Milton Caniff as Dude Henrick in the comic strip, "Terry and the Pirates," and later killed flying one of the first C.N.A.C. Shanghai-Canton runs after the end of the war; "Skip" Adair, who helped me recruit the First American Volunteer Group and served on the staff of the China Air Task Force; Jim Bledsoe, who returned to China to command a P-38 fighter squadron in the Fourteenth Air Force; Willio Heston, Jr., star, and nephew of an even more famous All-American star, of the Michigan University football team, later a colonel in the Fourteenth Air Force; Emil Scott, who died at the controls of a C.N.A.C. transport in an electrical storm over Kunming; Harold Johnson, killed flying the Generalissimo's Boeing transport; and Bill Cherymisin, who escaped the Japanese in 1942, flying a Boeing Flying Fortress, overloaded with refugees from the Dutch East Indies, to Australia on three engines. Harold Mull completed his contract and died on a boat en route to home. Boatner Carney joined me early in 1938 and remained to assist me after the arrival of the A.V.G.

On the whole they were a loyal, devoted group, and they gave the best they had to train China's embryo flyers. A number of the boys were married, and I never knew a finer group of wives. "Babe" Johnson, "Steve" Adair, Lois Mull, Pearl Heston, and "Billy" Preston accompanied their husbands into the remote mountain areas of China. They lived in dirty hotels, on river boats, or set up housekeeping in mud-walled cottages as occasion required. They remained cheerful and uncomplaining throughout. "Scotty" (Emil Scott) married near

the end of his tour of duty, and his wife was interned in Manila by the Japanese.

Teaching is a difficult job at best. With mechanically minded Americans teaching classically educated Chinese to fly, there was ample opportunity for all the clashing elements of the two conflicting civilizations to rub raw against each other in nerve-racking discord. In later years many American newcomers to China marveled at my ability to deal smoothly with the Chinese and generally attributed it to some occult touch. That ability was acquired the hard way through years of experience—often bitter, often painful, but always instructive.

My first trouble in teaching the Chinese occurred early in the war during those tense weeks before the Japanese attack on Shanghai. At the Generalissimo's request, I inspected a Chinese bomber squadron at Nanchang, which was equipped with American-built Glenn Martin B-10 bombers. Never have I seen such unenthusiastic airmen. Most of them had their families housed in Nanchang and preferred the comforts of family life to the rigors of flying. Their attitude was that since they were, in their own estimation, superior pilots, it would be a confession of weakness to practice. Day after day practice flights were scheduled, only to find the flying line deserted when the hour for take-off neared. Finally the Generalissimo relayed orders through General Mow that the bombers would practice "without fail." Stinging under Mow's orders, the squadron leader took off, circled the field a few times, and then came in for a landing. Just above the runway he cut his throttles and deliberately sideslipped the heavy bomber down with a grinding crash. Propellers bent, wings crumpled, and the plane broke in half. Both engines broke loose from their mountings and rolled across the field. Out of the wreckage calmly strolled the squadron leader, unhurt and swathed in an icy contempt.

"That is what comes of practice," he spat at Mow and myself, who had witnessed the crash. Shortly after the fighting began at Shanghai, a bomber mission was planned against the Japanese naval vessels and supply ships off the Yangtze mouth. The faster Martins were supposed to rendezvous with the slower Heinkel squadron and allow the Heinkels to set the pace to the targets, with both squadrons protected by the P-26 fighters. This same Martin squadron commander calmly ignored the rendezvous, purposely ran away from the Heinkels after picking up the fighters, jettisoned bombs, and returned his planes unscratched to their base. The Heinkels, commanded by the indomitable Lieut. Col. Shih, went on to their targets and pressed home a determined attack on the ships that cost them three out of five planes but

sank two Japanese vessels. Both of the returning Heinkels, including Shih's, were badly damaged by Jap fighters.

The Martin squadron leader was given a brisk walk to the firing squad and executed. But Chinese military code also demanded punishment for Shih because he too, through no fault of his own, had failed to make the ordered rendezvous. My strenuous fight to save Shih from demotion was futile until some subtle soul suggested that Shih be reduced a grade for failure to obey orders and promoted two grades for bravery in action. These devious ways always seemed sheer nonsense to most Americans.

Paradoxically China has always leaned strongly on foreign advisers, particularly technical experts. When things go wrong the foreigners generally offer the most convenient scapegoat and are easily saddled with the national woes. I remember well a visit from Dr. T. V. Soong, when he was spending part of a temporary exile from the Chungking government in Yunnan. His critics had forced him from the government on charges that he had introduced too many foreign advisers to China. As we walked along the banks of one of the main canals that irrigated the network of rice paddies on the Kunming Plateau, T. V. kicked at the red Yunnan clay.

"They blame me for introducing foreign advisers," he grumbled, "but these irrigation ditches were built seven hundred years ago by Arabian engineers from Palmyra, imported by the Mongol khans."

There were frequent clashes during my early China years with the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek, due primarily to my impatience contrasted with their Oriental time sense. They could think in terms of decades and dynasties when days and weeks seemed so vital to me.

My Chinese cook at Kunming forcibly impressed me with this differential between Occidental and Oriental time values. For breakfast I always insisted on three-minute eggs. The first batch this cook brought in were almost raw. Under questioning he assured me he had boiled them exactly three minutes. I asked him to try it a little longer next time. He returned with a set of hard-boiled eggs. Thoroughly irritated I asked him how he told time. Long interrogation through an interpreter finally produced the intelligence that he told time by the sun. I had my interpreter teach him how to count for exactly three minutes in Chinese and thereafter I enjoyed genuine three-minute eggs.

I had expected to deal only with tactical problems of the Chinese Air Force. However, it was soon evident that the Chinese had made

the same mistake so many other people have made and mistook a few airplanes and pilots for airpower. They had no supply or maintenance organizations, and from the first I found myself deeply entangled in the labyrinth of Chinese logistics. Supply problems remained my biggest headache until the end of the war. I finally developed a technique for dealing with Madame Chiang that proved effective. Instead of discussing my immediate problems, I approached her with a sad visage and announced that I was tendering my resignation and regretfully returning to the United States.

"No, no, you can't go," was Madame's standard reaction. "Tell me your troubles and we will do something about them."

On her urging I would reluctantly disgorge my most pressing problem, and she would apply her amazing energies to its solution. During the first hectic months of the war, my resignations averaged one a week, but considerable improvement was noticeable in the Chinese Air Force.

My chronic impatience must have been a heavy cross for Madame Chiang to bear. One day she asked me to accompany her to the Generalissimo and tell him my troubles. I gave him a long harangue on the inefficiency of the Chinese Air Force. He listened patiently to Madame's translation for about thirty minutes and then cut me short with a shrug of his shoulders and a short grunted sentence, leaving the room abruptly.

"He says he knows all about the things you have told him, and he knows the men you have reported are no good," Madame translated.

"If he knows all about them, why doesn't he do something to them?" I exploded.

"He says that the Chinese are the only people he has to work with, and if we get rid of all those people who are at fault, who will there be left?" Madame replied. Not until years later, when I was struggling to organize an American air force in China, did I really appreciate the Generalissimo's dilemma. Lack of honest, technically competent, loyal subordinates was his worst problem. He managed by playing off one against the other, getting what he could from them, and every now and then lopping off a few heads as a warning that there was a limit to his patience.

During the dark years between the fall of Hankow and Pearl Harbor, I developed a new respect and appreciation for the Generalissimo's unique personality. It hardly seemed possible during those long and bitter years that Free China could survive, much less emerge victorious, yet he never doubted the issue.

He traveled up and down the provinces of the hinterland, whipping up sagging morale.

"We will fight for a hundred years if necessary," he chanted to his people. "We are losing battles, but we need only to win the final battle. China will never yield."

The Japanese never gave up their efforts to win the Generalissimo to their side. He had many offers that would have seemed attractive to a lesser man when China stood alone and hopes for foreign aid waned. The Japanese always recognized that they could not consolidate their hold on China or exploit it profitably without the collaboration of the Generalissimo. By his personal determination to fight to the death, he contributed immeasurably to the enemy's eventual frustration.

Bribery was a tremendous problem in dealing with the Chinese. The line between legitimate squeeze, elaborate gifts, and large-scale corruption is often hard for the Occidental eye to discern. When I went to work for the Chinese, the Generalissimo made available to me a substantial drawing account for "gifts" to ease my way in governmental circles. I decided early in the game to avoid the pitfalls of this Oriental morass and neither gave nor accepted any of the elaborate gifts that, by Western standards, boiled down to simple bribery. My gifts were confined to fountain pens, mechanical pencils, and other inexpensive gadgets that so delight the nonmechanical Chinese. In return I received delicacies from every part of China for my table and, as my reputation as a gourmet spread, particularly the highly spiced pepper sauces in which China rivals Louisiana. I took it as a tribute to the success of this policy that after 1939 no Chinese even bothered to offer me a bribe.

My policy in dealing with the Chinese eventually boiled down to rolling with their punches and yielding on many minor, unimportant matters and always facing them down with a determined, stubborn stand on every major issue. It took a tremendous amount of time and energy, which many Americans were unwilling to expend on the Chinese, but in the end I felt it was worth it because it worked and enabled me to accomplish the things I wanted to do.

When the Japanese War began, China was in the midst of a fundamental social revolution that resolved itself basically into a struggle between the old traditions of Chinese civilization and the impact of mechanized, liberal Western civilization. This struggle between the traditionalists and modernists will go on in China for generations, and much of China's progress will depend on the pace of this contest.

The Chinese Air Force was a small but important facet of this cleavage. The old guard, who were trained in the hodgepodge days of the Italians, were traditionalists. They were indifferent flyers, en-crusted in seniority and well versed in the obstructionist tactics that made their lives profitable, pleasant, and unprogressive. There was no hope of improvement in them. The young cadets who poured into the Kunming training school were a different type. They had grown up in the war and moved westward under the pressure of Japanese bayonets. One class of cadets, which enlisted just before the fall of Nanking in December 1937, wandered westward in a state of semi-starvation for eighteen months before they reached Kunming. This same class learned to fly in the American-supervised primary schools of Yunnan, became the first class to go to the United States for flight training, and then had to wait until formation of the Chinese-American Composite Wing in the winter of 1943-44 before they got combat planes and finally went into action against the Japanese in the spring of 1944. They waited nearly seven years for their revenge on the Japanese, and when their hour of revenge struck, they took it in full measure.

As I sank deeper into the training problems of the Yunnan schools, I became more impressed with the idea that the job involved building more than an air force and that these young cadets, cast by the war in a different mold from their predecessors, offered hope for a nucleus of modern postwar leaders of their country. That was one of the reasons why I insisted on keeping the training program going and pressed for sending them to the United States for a full exposure to the combination of American technology and democracy.

Our work with the Chinese Air Force was greatly aided by the chief of training, General C. J. Chow, now the *commanding general* of the air force. We would have accomplished little or nothing had it not been for General Chow's unfailing support. Often he did not fully understand our reasons for doing things a certain way, but on the showdown he always supported us. He became chief of the air force in 1940 and continued to give me the same loyal friendly support throughout the remainder of the war. In return I exerted every effort to train, equip, and supply the Chinese Air Force. By the end of the war, the Chinese Air Force was an effective fighting force with well-trained ground and air crews. Given equal training and equipment, I rate them well above the Japanese as airmen.

Trouble with the old guard of the air force began early at Kunming. The Curtiss-Wright Hawk 75's, ordered in the summer of 1937, arrived

in midsummer of 1938, slipping through Canton just before the Japs moved in. Various troubles, including the fact that the planes had not been test flown at the Curtiss factory before shipment and consequently performed twenty miles per hour slower than the contract specified, delayed fitting them for combat. Curtiss engineers had to be sent from the United States to make the adjustments necessary to bring the new Hawks up to their advertised speeds. It was winter before the Chinese began to fly them. During less than a month of preliminary training, two of the three squadrons were crippled by flying accidents. The Generalissimo, enraged by the loss of so many new planes, ordered the remaining Hawk pilots to Kunming for training under my jurisdiction.

The first contingent arrived on a beautiful clear January day with only a light wind ruffling the airport windsock. In this perfect flying weather six of thirteen Hawks cracked up during landing before my angry eyes. I immediately ordered every Hawk pilot to undergo a thorough check flight in basic trainers with American instructors. Gen. Chow, then Chinese head of the Kunming training command, questioned my authority to subject the Hawk pilots, all of whom were regular Chinese Air Force officers, to the American check flight. He telegraphed Chungking asking confirmation of my authority. His answer was a telegram signed by the Generalissimo backing my stand. From that day on, satisfied that I was acting only within my authority, Chow became a good friend and efficient colleague through the remaining years of the war.

Check of the Hawk pilots revealed that some of them had only a hazy idea how to fly even a basic trainer, many of them were poor pilots, and all of them lacked adequate training. I washed out half of them and sent the rest back to basic trainers to polish their technique. It was the first time in Chinese Air Force history that pilots had been washed out for incompetence. Backed by the Generalissimo's authority, it set a precedent that paved the way for introducing American methods.

During these years of self-imposed exile in the Chinese hinterland, I laid the foundations for the unique American air operations that featured the final three years of the Japanese war in China. In addition to my solid relations with Chinese of both high and low estate, these operations were based on clusters of strategically located airfields and an air-raid warning system that covered Free China. Without these three solid supports American airpower could hardly have functioned in China.

When I first came to China all airfields were turf surfaced, most of them merely cleared and leveled meadows with dusty dirt strips for runways. These fields were dusty in dry weather, quagmires when it rained, and hardly suitable for use by heavy bombers. I began to build the first solid runway at Nanking, with thousands of coolies carrying old brick and broken tiles from the ancient Ming tombs outside the city for runway foundation. The Japanese took Nanking before the runway was finished, so I began all over again at Hankow.

There 120,000 coolies built a 4,800-foot runway in sixty days. It was able to take the heaviest bombers of that vintage. Rock for this runway had to be transported a hundred miles down the Han River on rafts and sampans. The Generalissimo had given orders that this gigantic job was to be finished in sixty days, on pain of severe penalties for failure. The energetic mayor of Hankow, K. C. Wu, spent a large part of his time at the field, during the last three or four weeks of work, exhorting the contractors to greater effort. The deadline was met.

Although their air force had virtually vanished, the Chinese began an extensive airfield-building program during the winter of 1938-39. It was during this period that the key eastern fields of Hengyang, Lingling, Kweilin, and Liuchow were modernized and equipped with stores of gas, bombs, and ammunition. Construction of Paoching and Chihkiang fields was also begun. I am proud of the part I played in building Chihkiang, for it was this field that, during 1944-45, stood fast as our last bastion in East China, defying every Japanese effort to capture it. I came to Chihkiang in the fall of 1938 when the only other foreigners in the area were a Dutch and a Belgian priest. Their mission was too far from the airfield site, which I personally selected, so I lived for two weeks with the Chinese coolies who began leveling hills for the landing area.

All over Free China these human ant heaps rose to turn mud, rock, lime, and sweat into 5,000-foot runways to nest planes not yet built in Los Angeles and Buffalo factories. Even I had a hard time keeping track of this vast effort. One day Billy MacDonald flew a two-seater trainer to pick me up at Kweiyang after an inspection trip by car to Chihkiang. On our way back to Kunming, the cockpit canopy blew off. While keeping our heads down out of the slip-stream blast, we lost our bearings. We kept on in a general westerly direction, hoping we would pick up an identifying landmark in Yunnan. After an hour we spotted what looked to be a typical swarming ant heap of an airfield under construction.



Buzzing the area we found completed a part of the field large enough for us to land. Chinese workers hauled gas to refuel us from a cache in the hills six miles away. This American aviation gas had been hauled by mule-pack trains in a six-week journey from Kunming. The field was Kwangnan—about one hundred and fifty miles southeast of Kunming. During reorientation of the Fourteenth Air Force at the end of 1944, Kwangnan's location proved ideal for fighter operations against our former bases in eastern China, then occupied by the enemy. Five years after its construction Kwangnan fitted into our tactical plans when we needed it most. So it was with countless other fields scattered all over China ready and waiting when the need was greatest.

The Chinese air-raid warning system was a vast spider net of people, radios, telephones, and telegraph lines that covered all of Free China accessible to enemy aircraft. In addition to continuous intelligence of enemy attacks, the net served to locate and guide lost friendly planes, direct aid to friendly pilots who had crashed or bailed out, and helped guide our technical intelligence experts to wrecks of crashed enemy aircraft.

Most efficient sector of the net was developed in Yunnan as a dire necessity. After the Japanese captured Hainan Island, they used it as a base to mount attacks against Chinese training schools, first at Liuchow and then at Kunming after it became the main flying center.

The Yunnan net was the first to use radios in China, principally because normal communications did not exist in this wilderness province. Radio parts were smuggled into China from Hong Kong and assembled in Kunming under direction of John Williams, later communications officer of the A.V.G. and Fourteenth Air Force, and Harry Sutter. With the help of C. C. Wong, John and Harry set up radios to cover the enemy approach from Hainan Island, and we began to get sufficient warning at Kunming to avoid most enemy raids. Later when the Japanese took Indo-China and Burma, the net was expanded to cover those approaches. When the enemy sought to foil the net by swinging wide around Kunming and approaching from the north, we set up a special belt of one-hundred-mile coverage in all directions. Eventually one hundred and sixty-five radios operated in the Yunnan net, some of them in such remote and inaccessible spots that even the rugged mule trains could not reach them, and air supply was their only contact with the outside world. Later when the American air force in China began to move eastward, a section of the Yunnan net was transplanted to the coastal provinces to pro-

vide warning for our advanced fields. It was the Yunnan net that was a key to the early A.V.G. successes and the defense of Chinese terminals this side of the Hump against fantastic numerical odds.

C. C. Wong, my artillerist friend of Nanking days, did his very best to see that the net never failed us. The only time a Japanese plane bombed an American base in China unannounced was on Christmas Eve of 1944, when a lone bomber sneaked in from Indo-China and attacked Kunming from the traffic pattern of transports circling to land after their Hump trip. The net that night reported "one unknown" from the Yunnan border to Kunming, but the American fighter-control officer in charge refused to believe the reports and did not call an alert.

The net also provided us with an unsolved mystery. One day before the fall of Hankow, the net reported a single enemy plane coming upriver from Wuhu. Nine fighters were dispatched and shot the bomber down about fifty miles from Hankow. When Chinese soldiers reached the wrecked plane, they found all of the crewmen firmly wired in their seats. What the purpose of this macabre mission was, we never determined.

When floods wiped out part of the net in Kwangsi Province in the summer of 1943, at a crucial moment in the air battles over eastern China, Wong rushed an emergency telephone system into the province. Wire was strung from trees and improvised poles to get the net working again. The millions of Chinese who served faithfully in the net were intensely proud of the role they were playing in air operations and took personal pride in the air defeats of the enemy. Later I made it a point to distribute operational summaries of American air activities in Chinese leaflets to the net workers so as to let them know what they were helping us to accomplish. The net functioned reliably during all kinds of weather and only advances of the Japanese ground armies put its stations out of action. Before the end of the war I was able to secure several thousand (American air-raid spotters' wings from the Office of Civil Defense and distributed them to key Chinese in the net. They certainly earned their wings.

The Chinese net combined with Chinese intercepts of Japanese coded radio messages later enabled me to operate my tiny air forces against tremendous odds. I always knew where the enemy was going to strike in time to concentrate my forces against his major blows. I was present in the bombproof headquarters in Chungking late in 1938 when a Japanese aviation radioman renounced the Emperor and Japanese imperialism and turned over to the Chinese all of the Japa-

nese operational codes. Later the Chinese recruited a corps of Japanese signalmen from their prisoners and persuaded them to work for the Chinese, cracking their countrymen's codes. For years the Chinese were intercepting and breaking most of the enemy's operational codes, but it remained for the United States to flesh the top Japanese codes and turn them into "Magic"—the intelligence that played a major role in winning the Pacific war. Although the Japanese were defeated too often through these cracked codes for coincidence, they never were aware of what was going on and continued to use the same systems until their final defeat.

The war continued to go badly for the Chinese. While I was still living in Hankow, on May 10, 1938, I heard the sound of firecrackers in the streets outside my apartment. The Chinese were celebrating the victory of Taierchwang in which a Japanese army of twenty-five thousand men had been annihilated—the first real Chinese victory of the war. The Japanese were then driving toward Hankow from the north and had taken the key town of Hsuehchow after a siege that was disastrous for the Chinese defenders. After the fall of Hsuehchow, the Generalissimo changed his tactics and ordered that henceforth there were to be no more pitched battles pitting Chinese manpower against Japanese tanks and artillery.

The Chinese henceforth allowed the Japanese to make deep but narrow penetrations in their lines, and then when the Japanese were overextended and far from their supply lines, the Chinese counter-attacked along the Japanese flanks and rear in an effort to surround and annihilate the enemy. These methods of the Romans against Hannibal were the tactics of Taierchwang and all subsequent Chinese victories. Not until 1944 did the Japanese develop a successful method of coping with these tactics. After taking Hsuehchow, the Japanese raced along the Lung hai railway toward Chengchow—the junction of the Lung hai and the Peiping-Hankow railway. When their main force reached a point just southeast of Kaifeng, the Generalissimo issued his famous order to dynamite the Yellow River dikes and turn this torrent from its old course into the path of the advancing Japanese. The dikes were blown, drowning thousands of Chinese along with the Japanese, but the enemy was stalled on the north bank of the Yellow River for five years—until the spring of 1944.

Foiled in the north, the next Japanese thrust at Hankow came up the Yangtze where the enemy's navy could play a major role. At high-water season destroyers could operate all the way to Hankow. The

provisional capital fell to this assault in the fall of 1938. About the same time Canton, the major port of South China, was taken by a Japanese expeditionary force. Later the remaining coastal ports and Hainan Island were occupied in an attempt to seal hermetically China from the rest of the world.

In the first two years of war China had suffered losses that by conventional standards would have forced a nation to surrender. These losses included:

- eleven provinces
- all the key railroads
- the Yangtze and Pearl Rivers—China's main water arteries
- approximately 95 per cent of Chinese industry
- the capital and all centers of industry, finance, and raw materials
- the best divisions of the army
- virtually all of the air force.

Yet China kept on fighting and only a few even thought of surrender.

Although I flew my last fighter mission in October of 1938, my stay in Yunnan was punctuated by frequent flights all over Free China in two-seater trainers and light transports. I learned to know the face of China as only an airman can.

Except for the thud of Japanese bombs the rest of the world made little impact on Yunnan in those years. Days were spent in the endless grind of training. Cribbage, poker, and an occasional movie, old before I came to China, that was shown in the Nanping Theater, absorbed our nights. I played considerable tennis at the Kunming French Club during those years. Mail took six weeks to reach the States via railroad to Hanoi, by Air France to Marseille, and then by ship to America. Later the Pan American clippers spanning the Pacific cut that to ten days, by making C.N.A.C. connections at Hong Kong. There were also occasional trips by car and mule into the mountains to reclaim the bodies of C.N.A.C. or Eurasia air-line pilots who had blundered into cloud-screened Yunnan peaks.

In September of 1939 the European War echoed faintly in Kunming. A special train on the narrow-gauge railroad carried all Frenchmen of military age to Hanoi. German pilots of Eurasia Air-line headed for Hong Kong with their families. That winter I met Colonel Joseph Warren Stilwell for the first time. He was a gaunt, leathery man with a perpetual squint through his steel-rimmed glasses. Visiting Yunnan as U.S. military attaché in China, Stilwell invited me to dinner in a

Kunming hotel. We spent a pleasant evening together, discussing the Chinese Air Force.

I took leave to spend Christmas of 1939 in Louisiana and made another effort to return to active duty with the U.S. Air Corps. Again the answer was "no." I returned to China early in 1940 and settled down to the Yunnan grind again, little dreaming of what lay ahead.

EARLY in 1939 the Japanese began their tremendous effort to break the back of Chinese resistance by sustained bombing of every major population center in Free China. The war settled into a stalemate soon after the fall of Hankow. Chinese armies were entrenched behind natural barriers. The Japanese were unable and unwilling to invest in a costly ground offensive to root them out.

In the north, opposing armies exchanged perfunctory shots across swirling muddy eddies of the Yellow River. In central China the Yangtze gorges kept the Japanese Navy from Chungking and the mountain bastions of Szechwan barred the way by land. In the south the Japs clung to their island of conquest around Canton, unwilling to brave the seasonal floods and rugged terrain of the Kwantung interior. Renewed Japanese peace offensives, aimed first at the Generalissimo and then attempting to woo the Chinese with Wang Ching Wei's puppet government at Nanking, met with dismal failure.

To blast out this military and diplomatic impasse the Japanese called in their air force to bomb the Chinese into submission. The theory of destroying a people's will and capacity to resist from the air was another page from the Douhet text but more valid than his unescorted-bomber thesis. Only airpower could leap over the Yellow River, span the Yangtze gorges, and breach the Kwantung Mountains to strike at the heart of Free China.

The Japanese bombed Chungking for the first time in January 1939 but dropped their bombs harmlessly twenty miles away. The city was screened by the cold wet mists that were so bitterly chilly on the ground but were soon more welcome than the fairest summer day. During the spring, the bombing offensive exploded all over Free China, like giant firecrackers at a macabre festival. Bombers from Formosa blasted the coastal ports. Foochow alone took more than fifty raids. Students from the Jap flying schools at Canton practiced bomb-

ing on the cities of southeast China that later became the springboard for the American air offensive in China—Linchow, Nanning, Kweilin, Kienow, and Kanchow. Japanese Navy planes from Hainan Island blasted our training fields in Yunnan.

The Japanese had too keen an appreciation of airpower to allow the Chinese to hatch a new air force unmolested. During good weather the Japanese bombers were over Kunming almost every day. We had only training planes on the Yunnan fields and a few short-range antiaircraft guns at Kunming. Most of our flight training had to be done in the early morning or late afternoon when the probability of air raids was smallest. Enemy bombs killed Chinese cadets in their barracks, demolished my house in Kunming, and slaughtered thousands of civilians in the city. A near miss splattered my office with shrapnel and tile fragments.

When the winter mists lifted leaving Chungking naked and unmistakable on the stony ridge between the fork of the Chaling and Yangtze rivers, I was in the capital to observe the Japanese return. They came on a clear sunny day early in May. There was ample warning of the raid, but the Szechwanese refused to take shelter. They went home, closed their doors, and waited. I squatted on a hillside above a mission compound that later became headquarters of the United States forces in China, watching the enemy approach and alternating between field glasses and my movie camera. There were twenty-seven bombers in a perfect V formation, like Canada geese heading north from Louisiana in the spring. Approaching the bomb run they swung into line abreast with a precision that aroused my admiration for their airmanship. Open bomb bays sprinkled the city with hundreds of silvery incendiaries that burned the heart out of the capital and left raging fires for three days.

I went down into the burning city and helped fight the fires with hand pumps and bucket brigades. It was like trying to quench a forest fire with a garden hose. Exploding bamboo sparks and crashing wooden walls spread the flames until they gutted the town and stopped only at the river's edge. More than ten thousand persons were killed by smoke and flame. The next day the Japs were back again with twenty-seven bombers to rekindle smoldering fires. This time they met unexpected opposition from what, I believe, were the first aircraft to use cannon in combat. George Weigel, one of the pilots from the International Squadron, flew a Curtiss P-36 with two 23-mm. Danish Madsen cannon installed under the wings. He was reported to have shot down four Japanese bombers while demonstrating the cannon

and plane. After the fight Weigel landed at a field down the Yangtze from Chungking and crashed to his death the next day trying to return to the capital.

For the next year in my travels around Free China, I waded through the rubble of bomb-battered ruins, smelled the sickeningly sweet stench of corpses rotting in wreckage, and choked on the smoke of burning cities. Everywhere I went, I took movies of the Japanese formations, filled my notebooks with comments on their tactics, and added to the measure of my impotent rage at the sight of the unmolested forays.

In the summer of 1940 the large-scale attacks were renewed on Chungking. Day after day ninety to one hundred bombers pounded the city. I visited the Chinese fighter pilots who were defending the city. They told me they were using "Russian" tactics.

"What do you mean Russian tactics?" I asked. The only Russian tactic I had seen was to pull up within fifty feet behind the enemy and blast with all guns.

"We fly at 18,000," the pilots informed me. "The Japs come in at 15,000. We dive on them, firing in a vertical dive and pull out at 5,000 feet."

"You can't hit a bomber that way," I snorted.

"No," they admitted, "but they can't hit us either."

In the early fall of 1940 the first Japanese Model Zeros came buzzing over Chungking at 27,000 feet, like hawks in a chicken yard. They shot down the Chinese fighters before the defenders knew what hit them. Among these were the remaining Curtiss-Wright Hawk squadrons that I had trained in Kunming.

Watching those fall raids with the Chinese fighters decimated and Chinese flak bursting furiously at 15,000 feet while the bombers sailed serenely at 16,000 made me sick to my stomach. One of those impotent Chinese 37-mm. flak guns nearly finished me off. I was standing on my favorite hill above the mission compound when the gun let fly from a newly installed position below me at the base of the hill. Blast from the first shell knocked off my hat. I hit the dirt before the second was on its way and watched the rest of the raid from my back, pinned down by the Chinese fire.

Lack of Chinese air defense inspired the Japanese to incredible displays of audacity. Japanese fighter pilots landed their planes on Chengtu airdrome, deep in the heart of Free China and later an American Superfortress base, and scampered across the field to set fire to Russian fighters and training planes camouflaged under rice straw.



Other Japanese fighters circling the field kept the Chinese defenders pinned down with strafing fire. The Japanese formations circled over the cities of East China with open bomb bays and made three and four runs across their target without dropping bombs, to prolong the ordeal and add an agonizing note of uncertainty for the victims huddled on the ground. The entire purpose of these performances was to impress the Chinese with the futility of their resistance and the certainty of their extermination from the air if they were foolish enough to spurn surrender. It was powerful propaganda. Peace talk sprouted in the bomb-harrowed land, growing steadily until it reached a critical climax in the months after Pearl Harbor.

In mid-October I received an urgent summons to Chungking from the Generalissimo. My Beech transport had hardly landed at Chungking's sand-bar strip when the air raid sounded. I had to fly the Beech away to a dispersal field one hundred and fifty miles away. When I finally saw the Generalissimo, I found him acutely worried about the Japanese bombings. His tours through the provinces had convinced him that there was a limit to Chinese ability to take these unopposed poundings from the air. Unless they were stopped or reduced by effective defenses, he was afraid the Chinese might have to knuckle under.

The Generalissimo explained that he had a plan for ending the Japanese bombings—buy the latest American fighters and hire American pilots to fly them. What did I think?

I was pessimistic. European orders were absorbing all planes not earmarked for the Army and Navy. It appeared to me that the United States had no good fighters to sell. I wasn't keen on the P-40 because of the vulnerability of its liquid-cooled engine in combat. It appeared too heavy and slow to take on the fast-climbing Nates and Zeros.

The Generalissimo was unimpressed by my comments.

"You must go to the United States immediately," he said. "Work out the plans for whatever you think you need. Do what you can to get American planes and pilots."

General P. T. Mow accompanied me. We were directed to report to Dr. T. V. Soong immediately upon our arrival in Washington.

Two days later I was in Hong Kong again, waiting for the Pan American Airways clipper to San Francisco. As the big flying boat settled down in a plume of spray at the now familiar milestones of Manila, Guam, Wake, Midway, and Oahu, I had plenty of time to ponder my task. Strategy for stopping the Japanese bombers was simple. The Japanese were then throwing one hundred to one hundred

and fifty bombers a day against Chungking, their primary target. Estimates of their reserve strength led me to believe they would raise the ante to five hundred bombers if a showdown loomed. Experienced American pilots flying the latest fighter types could knock the Japanese down, according to my calculations, at a rate of five to one initially, and higher as the Japanese lost their confidence. This proved to be a conservative estimate. Actual combat ratio for the original Flying Tigers was twelve to one. This was heavier attrition than any air force could afford. By breaking the Jap's back over Chungking, where they would fight the hardest, I hoped to inflict losses sufficiently heavy to cripple their entire China bombing program. Then if they decided to continue bombing elsewhere, we would get ample warning via the Chinese net and could shift our forces to meet the threat wherever it developed. The American fighter group would function as a highly mobile aerial fire department, with the added advantage of knowing in advance where the next blaze would flare.

Tactics were based on an improved version of the Emperor's birthday turkey shoot over Hankow in 1938, which bagged thirty-six of thirty-nine Japs. Using a four-squadron group, two squadrons would make the initial assault on enemy bombers, leaving the third squadron as a reserve to dive into the fray at the proper moment to turn defeat into a bloody rout. The more I mentally fought those battles over Chungking the greater our margin of victory. The closer I flew to the United States, the dimmer appeared my prospects of getting the wherewithal really to fight them.

In Washington I reported to shrewd, erudite Dr. T. V. Soong. From his mansion on Woodley Road, Dr. Soong was directing China's campaign to extract concrete aid from the United States. Dr. Soong ranks next to the Generalissimo as one of the ablest men in China. A Harvard graduate and a shrewd financier even among his own people, Soong is one of the few men in the world today who understand their own country and the United States equally well.

Soong was one of the pillars of the Nationalist Revolution in the nineteen-twenties when the monumental task of welding China into a political entity again began. As a young man he held the purse strings of the revolution. It was his resourceful financing that kept the Generalissimo's armies in the field better paid and fed than their opponents. Soong's political career has been blighted by an American-acquired bluntness that never sat well with the older Generalissimo, who is steeped in the Chinese traditions of veneration and respect of elders. As a result Soong has alternated rapidly between number-two

man in the Nationalist government and political exile. His role in modern China has been equivalent to that of a relief pitcher in a baseball game who sits out most of the action in the bull pen and is called into the game only when a crisis develops that calls for a sure hand, keen mind, and stout heart. It is unfortunate for both China and the United States that Soong has spent so many of the critical years pitching in the Chinese bull pen. He is the best bridge available between the United States and China. Any sound *rapprochement* between the two countries in modern times will undoubtedly require his presence as a key figure.

In the winter of 1940-41 his task in the United States was monumental. The American people were like an ostrich with its head buried in the sand, attempting to peck vigorously through its tail feathers. The few American eyes focused abroad were centered on Europe where England was fighting for survival. The Orient was completely forgotten. A sluggishly rising tide of public opinion was beginning to flow for aid to England. Hundreds of Americans were slipping across the Canadian border to join the R.C.A.F. and fight in Europe, but the idea of American volunteers in China seemed fantastic. Virtually everybody to whom I broached the subject told me, with varying degrees of courtesy, that I was insane.

The night I arrived in Washington, Dr. Soong took me to dinner with two distinguished newspapermen who were not unfamiliar with the Pacific situation—Edgar Ansel Mowrer, then with the *Chicago Daily News* and Joseph Wright Alsop, Jr., of the *New York Herald Tribune*. They were all somewhat dismayed to learn that, in my opinion, Japanese introduction of the Model Zero fighter over Chungking during the fall of 1940 now made it necessary to use the best available American fighters in China. Previously the Chinese plans had been based on getting older American types no longer needed by the Air Corps, and Dr. Soong's efforts had been aimed at commitments for types already obsolescent by American standards.

Mowrer and Alsop described the desperate pressure from England for every new plane off the American production lines. After losing the Battle of Britain the *Luftwaffe* was then engaged in its fierce night assaults on the London dock areas. Reports from American observers in England were gloomy. Mowrer and Alsop contended that China stood no chance of cutting into British aircraft priorities and consequently my volunteer project had little hope for success. Less than nine months later Alsop, in Navy uniform, saw the first P-40's of the First American Volunteer Group in China unloaded on the Rangoon docks

and was postering me for a job with the "utterly impossible." Joe was later captured at Hong Kong on an A.V.G. supply mission and spent nine months in Stanley internment camp before he was repatriated on the *Gripsholm*. He returned to China as a China Defense Supplies, Incorporated, official and finally served as my aide and adviser in the Fourteenth U.S. Air Force.

Visits to my old Air Corps acquaintances in the Munitions building evoked the same disbelief. Most of them were then staff officers flying swivel chairs and puttering with war plans. Their plans were all for Europe. When I visited the Munitions building in 1939, General Arnold asked me to lecture to his staff on the Sino-Japanese air war. It took Air Corps headquarters an hour to locate a large-scale map of China, and the one they finally produced had such scanty detail that I had to pencil in most of the locations that figured in the war.

Current intelligence on the Orient just didn't exist. All the time I was in China, I considered that my status as a retired Air Corps officer gave me the responsibility of passing on to American authorities any military information that was available. Very early in the Sino-Japanese war I made a collection of new types of Japanese equipment salvaged from crashed planes. An intelligence officer attached to the U.S. Embassy recognized the salvage as prime technical intelligence and I gave him his pick of it with the understanding that everything would be passed on to the Air Corps after the Navy had examined it. He had his Marines crate much of the equipment and carried it to what he thought was the safest place available in those last days before the fall of Nanking—the U.S. gunboat *Panay*. Two days later the *Panay* was sunk by Japanese planes, and the Japanese equipment went down with it into ten feet of Yangtze mud, where it still rests. Postwar attempts to raise the *Panay* were thwarted by the heavy mud deposits. It was obvious that the Japanese knew nothing of the *Panay's* intelligence cargo when they attacked her, for it would have given them an excellent excuse for the outrage.

My other efforts through the years before Pearl Harbor to transmit intelligence to where it would do the most good were about as successful as this *Panay* venture. In 1939 the Chinese captured a Japanese Nate (Type 97) intact and brought it to Chengtu, where I flew it through extensive service and combat tests in comparison with the Curtiss P-36, the British Gloucester Gladiator, and the Russian I-16. With the help of Chinese mechanics, I noted all its specifications, took numerous photographs, and compiled a thick dossier on its construction and performance. This plane was the forerunner of the Oscar,

and later many of the A.V.G. pilots found it more troublesome than the Zero because of its astonishing rate of climb and incredibly short turning radius. It is still one of the best acrobatic planes ever built. When I was in Washington in 1939, I turned over my dossier on the Nate to military intelligence of the War Department. Some months later in China I received a letter from the War Department thanking me for my interest and informing me that my data had been turned over to "aeronautical experts," who informed the War Department that it was impossible to build an aircraft of the performance I cited with the specifications submitted.

I never found out who the "aeronautical experts" were, but in 1940 "Possum" Hansell, then in charge of air intelligence, checked the War Department files with me and found the Nate dossier missing, with only a file copy of the War Department letter to me indicating it had ever existed. The Air Corps had never even seen the dossier. I brought back the data on the first Model Zero in the fall of 1940. The first Model Zeros (Zeke) had a level top speed of 322 miles per hour, range of 1,100 miles with a belly tank, could climb 16,000 feet in six minutes, and were armed with a 20-mm. cannon and four 7.7 machine guns. Air Corps technical manuals on Japanese aircraft in use at the time of Pearl Harbor devoted a blank page to the Zero. American pilots got their first information on its performance from the Zero's 20-mm. cannon a year later over Oahu and the Philippines.

Not until May of 1941 did a senior American military observer visit the Chinese war zone. Then Brigadier Generals H. B. Claggett and Harold H. George, commanding Air Corps units in the Philippines, and Commander E. B. McDonnell, of the Naval Air Service, visited Chungking. A vain effort was made to persuade them to allow Army and Navy pilots, on leave from the Philippines, to take aerial geography lessons in China by flying copilot on C.N.A.C. transports.

Although Air Corps headquarters was interested only in the European War, I detected no evidence that its top planners had absorbed any of the lessons of the Battle of Britain where the eight-gunned Spitfire and Hurricane fighters proved more than a match for German bombers unescorted or with fighter escort stretched beyond its effective range. By the time the American daylight bombing offensive against Germany got under way in the summer of 1942, the Chinese over Nanking, the British over London, and the A.V.G. over Rangoon had thoroughly proved the failure of unescorted day bombers against determined fighter attacks. Yet American heavy bombers were sent

over Europe unescorted by defensive fighters for over a year in a vain attempt to prove this fallacious doctrine of Douhet.

Early in 1940 I renewed my request for a return to active duty in the Air Corps, asking General Arnold for assignment as an instructor in fighter tactics. He offered me a post as Air Corps instructor at the coast-artillery school at Fortress Monroe. Later I learned I was to be used as a replacement for another Air Corps officer urgently needed for a public-relations post in Washington. I told Arnold I was not interested in towing targets for antiaircraft gunners and would return to duty only with Air Corps units. Arnold cited a regulation prohibiting retired officers from serving with troops or tactical units. That regulation is still on the books, and during the war I violated it for the three solid years I commanded the American air units in China.

In December 1940 after my return to Washington, Elwood R. (Pete) Quesada, later commander of the Ninth Tactical Air Force in Europe and now a lieutenant general commanding the Tactical Air Command, again offered me the coast-artillery post, with a promise of promotion to major. I was then drawing fifteen thousand dollars a year from the Chinese, and Air Corps captain's pay without flying status came to about forty-three hundred dollars. Pete was slightly piqued at my ingratitude. I never did convince the Air Corps that I was not just looking for a regular pay check but really wanted to do a specific job that I knew was being badly neglected.

Most of my time in Washington was spent flying a desk in the brick building on V Street that was headquarters of China Defense Supplies, Incorporated. There I sat during the winter in civilian clothes, as an employee of the Chinese government, planning the basic strategy that I was destined to use during the next three years as a general in the Army of the United States.

Original plans called for the injection of a rejuvenated Chinese Air Force spearheaded by American volunteers to upset the Pacific stalemate. This plan was submitted in detail to Dr. Soong in January 1941. It was predicated on the assumption that Japan was preparing further aggression with Singapore as the primary objective, the Dutch East Indies and the Philippines as alternate objectives.

It required no special intelligence or occult powers to forecast these moves. Ever since November of 1940, Japanese activities centered on preparations for a thrust to the south. Veteran divisions were withdrawn from China and replaced by green conscripts and Chinese puppet troops. After the fall of France left the colonial government of Indo-China at the end of a shaky limb, the Japanese began to squeeze

a never ending series of concessions from the frightened French colonials. The Gulf of Tonkin ports were occupied by the Japanese and turned into staging areas for the proposed southern expeditions. All Japanese troops engaged in the offensive into southern China from Indo-China were withdrawn and re-equipped in Hanoi and Haiphong.

Japanese officials served notice on the Dutch that the Nipponese Navy required oil from the Dutch East Indies, and all payments would be in yen or else! Although the French were capable of no resistance, the Japanese attacked a few garrisons and killed some French soldiers to impress the colonials with their ferocity. The nonaggression pact with Russia secured the Japanese northern frontier while Tokyo became more and more vociferous about its support of the Axis in Asia. Chinese intelligence considered that the extension of Japanese influence into southern Indo-China, with its key naval base at Cam Ranh Bay and the great port of Saigon, would be the final preliminary to the great southern offensive.

My plan proposed to throw a small but well-equipped air force into China. Japan, like England, floated her lifeblood on the sea and could be defeated more easily by slashing her salty arteries than by stabbing for her heart. Air bases in Free China could put all of the vital Japanese supply lines and advanced staging areas under attack. Begun in time and delivered with sufficient weight, an air offensive from China could have smashed the Japanese southern offensive before it left its home ports and staging areas.

This strategic concept of China as a platform of air attack on Japan offered little attraction to the military planners of 1941. It was not until the Trident Conference of 1943 that I found any appreciation of my strategy or any support for the plans to implement it. This support came from two civilians, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and was offered against the strong advice of their military advisers.

The first phase of these operations entailed pounding the airfields, ports, staging areas, and shipping lanes where the Japanese were accumulating their military strength in Formosa, Hainan Island, Canton, and Indo-China. If successful these attacks could force the postponement or cancellation of the Japanese offensive plans.

The effect of even small-scale air attacks against amphibious invasion preparations had been ably demonstrated by the Royal Air Force operations against the European channel ports in the fall of 1940.

The second phase was to be directed against the Japanese home:

islands, to burn out the industrial heart of the Empire with fire-bomb attacks on the teeming bamboo and heaps of Honshu and Kyushu. The Japanese taught me early in the war the lesson of incendiaries on an Oriental city. After the Japanese burned out Chungking in the summers of 1939 and 1940, the Chinese chief of ordnance, General Yu Ta Wei, an M.I.T. graduate, manufactured some crude thermite fire bombs. They were not satisfactory, so early in 1940 I wrote to General Arnold suggesting the value of a five-pound fire bomb for use against Oriental cities. Arnold wrote a testy reply that "the Air Corps was committed to a strategy of high-altitude precision bombing of military objectives" and that "use of incendiaries against cities was contrary to our national policy of attacking only military objectives." In the spring of 1941, Dr. Lauchlin Currie, special adviser to President Roosevelt on China, approached Arnold again, at my request, on the subject of incendiaries. Arnold admitted that the Air Corps had no fire bombs. Four years later the Twentieth Air Force B-29's spent nearly a year in ineffectual high-altitude bombing of Japan with high explosives before Major General Curtis LeMay threw away Arnold's text and sent them in at 5,000 feet, and overloaded with fire bombs, to burn the heart out of the industrial cities that nourished the enemy's military strength.

To carry out my strategic plans, I needed air bases along the eastern fringe of Free China, American fighters and bombers, and a cadre of experienced American pilots to lead the Chinese. The airfields were already available in China, stretching in three sinuous chains roughly parallel to the China coast and about two hundred and fifty miles apart. The final cluster of staging fields in Chekiang Province was only three to five air hours from the biggest industrial cities in Japan. Chinese pilots had already indicated their value in 1938 by staging Martin B-10's out of them for the first enemy air raid on Japan.

The plans called for a force of 350 fighters and 150 bombers to use these fields in 1941 with reinforcements of 700 fighters and 300 bombers arriving in China during 1942. At that time the Curtiss-Wright P-40 and the Republic P-43 were the most modern American fighters then in production. The Lockheed Hudson, a transport hastily converted into a bomber for the British, was the only American bomber with a power-driven gun turret. Neither P-43 nor Hudson had armor protection or leakproof tanks. Initial force was to be a P-40 fighter group and a Hudson bomber group, to be followed as soon as possible by the P-43's and a Douglas (A-24) dive-bomber group.

Supply was always a critical problem in China. To keep the proposed air force in action required full capacity of all available supply lines.



By early 1941 the Burma Road was the only remaining link between Free China and the rest of the world. The seventeen-thousand-ton monthly peak of the road could have been increased. New railroad construction in West China offered another hope of easing the supply problem. Increasing the smuggling trade from Hong Kong to the rocky China coast would supply our most advanced bases in East China.

Many long and dreary days were spent at my desk on V Street, ploughing through the myriad of details for these plans. There was no precedent for this kind of an air force. Every policy and detail had to be thoroughly planned in advance. I made a deal with Jerry Huang to have his War Area Service Corps house and feed all American airmen in China for one dollar a day. The W.A.S.C. had no experience with the personal habits of Occidentals, so I had to plan the hostels to be built for them in great detail, down to the size of rooms required for pilots, the amount of hot water required for showers, how many latrines necessary for each hostel, and the quantities of cattle, pigs, eggs, and chickens the meat-eating Americans would consume per month. All these problems and hundreds more the Chinese had to begin working on many months before the first Americans arrived. It required all of the cunning and resources at his command for Huang to have the hostels ready when the Americans appeared.

I had to prepare requisitions for every piece of equipment we needed—how many rounds of ammunition, how many pounds of oxygen, flying suits, paper clips, six-ton trucks, machine-gun barrels, ink, candy, sun goggles, shaving cream, razor blades, medical supplies, carbon paper, typewriters, and all of the other strange gear with which an air war was fought. Dr. Soong gave me *carte blanche* on supplies. "Buy what you need and send me the bills," were his only orders.

Many an American later owed his life to the quantity of sulfa drugs and vaccines we took to China. When the American Volunteer Group was disbanded, we turned over enough drugs to last the U.S. forces in China for a year, at a time when there was no sulfa or vaccine in China and no way to get them there.

I traveled around the country at a furious pace, visiting aircraft plants and equipment manufacturers. In one week I flew a round trip across the country from Washington to Los Angeles twice, without losing a single day's work at either end. Out of all these plans, the First American Volunteer Group of fighter pilots and fighter planes was the only salvage. Chinese orders were placed for the Republic P-43's and Lockheed Hudsons, but only a few of each were delivered before the Japanese attack turned off the spigot of supplies to the Orient. The

fighter group was China's most urgent need—first to smash the Japanese over Chungking and then to protect the trickle of supplies winding up the Burma Road.

Methods of implementing the fighter-group plan developed faster than I expected. It became evident during the winter that China had a small but powerful circle of friends in the White House and cabinet. Dr. Lauchlin Currie was sent to China as President Roosevelt's special adviser and returned a strong backer of increased aid to China in general and my air plans in particular. Currie was shrewd and scholarly, adept at threading projects through the maze of prewar Washington. Another trusted adviser of the President—Thomas Corcoran—did yeoman service in pushing the American Volunteer Group project when the pressure against it was strongest. Dr. Soong's two close personal friends—Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy, and Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of the Treasury, were the project's supporters in the Cabinet and instrumental in clearing away many of the official obstacles.

A mutual friend introduced me to Knox soon after I arrived in Washington. This bluff and hearty Rough Rider, who was then trying to ride herd on the blue-water, battleship admirals of the Navy, was one of the best-informed men on the Pacific situation I encountered in Washington. After our first meeting Knox called his staff and a number of top-ranking Navy admirals into his office to hear my story.

"I don't have any authority around here," he told them. "I'm just a civilian, but I want you all to hear what this man has to say."

Knox was anxious to have naval airmen represented in the A.V.G. and took a personal interest in the men who joined. He spent several hours with me going over the records of the Navy men in the A.V.G. when I returned to Washington in 1943 and saw that the Navy made an intelligent effort to retain their services for the naval air force. This was in marked contrast to the Army Air Corps attitude that labeled their A.V.G. alumni as black sheep. It was Knox who was able to plead the case of the A.V.G. in the highest White House circles and who probably did the most to shout down the bitter opposition of the admirals and the generals.

Planes were a tough problem. American plane production had hardly begun to stagger toward its dizzy wartime totals. The desperate situation in England gave the Royal Air Force a share of top priority with the Air Corps on the few planes trickling off the lines. My visits to the aircraft plants were fruitless until I went to the Curtiss-Wright factory at Buffalo. China had been a long-time, profitable customer for Curtiss-Wright, so my old friend, Burdette Wright, Curtiss vice-president,

came up with a proposition. They had six assembly lines turning out P-40's for the British, who had taken over a French order after the fall of France. If the British would waive their priority on one hundred P-40B's then rolling off one line, Curtiss would add a seventh assembly line and make one hundred later-model P-40's for the British. The British were glad to exchange the P-40B for a model more suitable for combat.

The P-40B was not an ideal airplane for the purpose required, but it was better than nothing and the only thing we could get at the time. Most of the P-40B's had already been fitted with British .303-caliber wing machine guns instead of American .30-caliber guns. The problem of getting odd-size ammunition for these guns was one of our worst headaches in Burma. All of the planes were supposed to be fitted with British VHF (very-high-frequency) radio equipment in England, so we got them without any radios. Unable to buy military radio equipment, China Defense Supplies, Incorporated, had to purchase ordinary commercial sport-plane radios, adding another hazard to our combat operations. These radios may have been fine for flying the radio ranges on a placid cross-country trip in a Piper Cub, but they couldn't stand the strain of combat operations and repeatedly failed at critical times.

The P-40B was not equipped with a gunsight, bomb racks or provisions for attaching auxiliary fuel tanks to the wings or belly. Much of our effort during training and combat was devoted to makeshift attempts to remedy these deficiencies. The combat record of the First American Volunteer Group in China is even more remarkable because its pilots were aiming their guns through a crude, homemade, ring-and-post gunsight instead of the more accurate optical sights used by the Air Corps and the Royal Air Force.

By January 1941, the Soong-Morgenthau combination had persuaded the British to accept the Curtiss swap. In February the planes were on the New York docks ready for shipment to Rangoon. At this critical stage William D. Pawley, Curtiss-Wright salesman in China, entered the picture. Pawley began an extraordinary international career selling Curtiss planes in China during the profitable war years. With the Chinese government he organized the Central Aircraft Manufacturing Company in China for the purpose of building aircraft.

Pawley's role in the A.V.G. project began with his demand that Curtiss-Wright pay him a 10-per-cent commission on the \$4,500,000 purchase price of the one hundred P-40's being sold to China. He produced his contract with Curtiss, which called for the commission on all planes sold by Curtiss in China, and threatened to get an injunction

against shipment of the P-40's unless he was paid. Curtiss-Wright refused to pay Pawley alleging he had nothing to do with the sale. Months were lost in futile negotiations until there was acute danger that the Chinese would lose the planes. Rather than pay Pawley, Curtiss-Wright was ready to sell them back to the R.A.F.

Secretary Morgenthau called a conference on April 1, 1941, for a showdown. The fight lasted all day. The Chinese were so desperate for the planes they offered to pay Pawley out of Chinese funds. Morgenthau refused to let them and concentrated on wearing Pawley down. Morgenthau threatened to take over the Curtiss contract as a war emergency, but Pawley didn't scare. Finally the Chinese suggested a compromise whereby Pawley would be paid \$250,000—considerably less than the \$450,000 he wanted—in return for which Central Aircraft Manufacturing Company would assemble, test fly, and service the P-40's in Burma and China. CAMCO then had an assembly plant at Loi-Wing just across the Burmese border in China that was ideally located as a heavy maintenance base. Late in April, the planes were shipped aboard an old slow Norwegian freighter. The first plane was lost when a cargo sling broke, depositing a P-40 fuselage in the waters of New York harbor.

Personnel proved a tougher nut to crack. The military were violently opposed to the whole idea of American volunteers in China. I tried to convince them of the large return in tactics, intelligence, and equipment evaluation they would get from a small investment in personnel. Many countries had tested their air strength in combat through the device of volunteers under a foreign flag—the Russians in China and Spain; the Germans and Italians in Spain—but nobody in the Navy and Munitions buildings would buy it. Lauchlin Currie and I went to see General Arnold in April of 1941. He was 100 per cent opposed to the project. Arnold told us he couldn't spare a single staff officer then without endangering the Air Corps expansion program and that he would oppose vigorously any diversion of Air Corps strength to any other country. Colonel Myron Wood, chief of Air Corps personnel, echoed Arnold's sentiments. In the Navy, Rear Admiral Jack Towers, then chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics and later commander of the Navy's Pacific air forces, also viewed the A.V.G. as a threat to his expansion program.

It was during those discouraging days that a stubby, sandy-haired second lieutenant named Johnny Alison flew a P-40 to Bolling Field in Washington for a demonstration before Chinese and American officials. Johnny Alison got more out of that P-40 in his five-minute demonstra-

tion than anybody I saw before or after. The Chinese were tremendously impressed.

When he landed, they pointed at the P-40 and smiled. "We need one hundred of these."

"No," I said, pointing to Alison, "you need one hundred of these."

Johnny Alison later came to China after teaching P-40 tricks to the R.A.F. and the Russians. He ran up a brilliant combat record as a squadron leader, served as second in command of Colonel Phil Cochran's First Air Commando Unit, which lauded Wingate's raiders two hundred miles behind the Jap lines in Burma, and finally was operations officer of the seven-hundred-plane Fifth Air Force in the Philippines and Okinawa. Johnny is now the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Aeronautics, holding one of the top administrative posts in civil aviation at the ripe old age of thirty-five.

Alison was the kind of pilot I needed for the A.V.G. Without one hundred of the men for whom Johnny Alison was a prototype, the P-40's might just as well have rusted on the Rangoon docks. It took direct personal intervention from President Roosevelt to pry the pilots and ground crews from the Army and Navy. On April 15, 1941, an unpublicized executive order went out under his signature, authorizing reserve officers and enlisted men to resign from the Army Air Corps, Naval and Marine Air Services for the purpose of joining the American Volunteer Group in China.

Since we were still working in strict secrecy, Pawley suggested to Dr. Soong that CAMCO be used as a blind to hire personnel. A confidential contract was drawn up between CAMCO and China Defense Supplies, Incorporated, in which CAMCO agreed to handle all A.V.G. financial matters at cost and provide complete maintenance and repair for our damaged aircraft at the Loi-Wing factory. In this contract the A.V.G. fighter squadrons were called "advanced training units," the P-40's were "advanced trainers," and I was designated "supervisor."

Orders went out to all military airfields, signed by Secretary Knox and General Arnold, authorizing bearers of certain letters freedom of the post, including permission to talk with all personnel. Field commanders were astonished when our mufti-clad recruiters appeared and enraged when they discovered the purpose of the visit was to lure men out of the services. Several spluttering commanders called Washington long distance for confirmation of their orders.

Richard Aldworth, a retired Army pilot, was hired to head the recruiting staff. He was still suffering from old crash injuries so the bulk of the work was supervised by "Skip" Adair, assisted by Rutledge Irvine,

a retired Navy commander, Harry Claiborne, and Senton L. Brown. They covered the country. There were not so many air bases in those days—Quantico for the Marines; Norfolk, San Diego, Pensacola, and Jacksonville for the Navy; Bolling, Selfridge, McDill, March, Mitchel, Langley, Hamilton, Eglin, Craig, Maxwell, Barksdale, and Randolph for the Army.

Their offer was a one-year contract with CAMCO to "manufacture, repair, and operate aircraft" at salaries ranging from \$250 to \$750 a month. Traveling expenses, thirty days leave with pay, quarters, and \$30 additional for rations were specified. They would be subject to summary dismissal by written notice for insubordination, habitual use of drugs or alcohol, illness not incurred in line of duty, malingering, and revealing confidential information. Before the end of the A.V.G., I had to dismiss at least one man for every cause except revealing confidential information. A system of fines was initiated for minor offenses.

There was no mention in the contract of a five-hundred-dollar bonus for every Japanese plane destroyed. Volunteers were told simply that there was a rumor that the Chinese government would pay \$500 for each confirmed Jap plane. They could take the rumor for what it was worth. It turned out to be worth exactly \$500 per plane. Although initially the five-hundred-dollar bonus was paid for confirmed planes destroyed in air combat only, the bonus was soon applied to planes destroyed on the ground—if they could be confirmed.

I had originally planned to give each pilot a final personal check, but in the hectic rush to get the group under way, I had to abandon the idea. We made one last desperate attempt to get six trained staff officers from the Air Corps, but Arnold was adamant. I pleaded for three and finally for a single officer as group executive, but Arnold stuck to his theme that the loss of even one staff officer would cripple the Air Corps expansion program. Later Air Corps headquarters bitterly criticized the A.V.G. and its successors in China for their lack of staff work. Not until the middle of 1943 did the Army send me any staff officers. In the meantime I had to use whatever American adventurers I could find knocking about loose in the Orient.

A clerk in the State Department passport division gave me my final taste of Washington officialdom. In applying for my passport, I listed my occupation as farmer. The clerk was skeptical.

"I own land in Louisiana, and I make a living from it," I replied to him. "That makes me a farmer."

He insisted I change my occupation. It took a call to the White House to convince him that I was a farmer.

I flew to San Francisco on United Air Lines and met the first contingent of the A.V.G. in the Mark Hopkins Hotel on July 7, the fourth anniversary of the Double Seventh, the night the Sino-Japanese war began. Nobody who saw that odd assortment of young men, looking slightly ill at ease and uncertain in their new civilian clothes, could have possibly imagined that in a few months they would be making history. The first group left on July 10 aboard the Dutch ship *Jaegersfontaine*. Japanese intelligence was not fooled by passports claiming occupations of musician, student, clerk, banker, etc., with a leader who was a farmer. The Japanese radio announced that the first group of American volunteer pilots planning to fight in China had left San Francisco by ship.

"That ship will never reach China," the Japanese radio chortled. "It will be sunk."

West of Hawaii passengers on the *Jaegersfontaine* spotted two warships, steaming in loose escort formation. Navy pilots identified them as the U.S. cruisers *Salt Lake City* and *Northampton*. The cruisers stuck with the Dutch boat as it swung far south of the regular shipping lanes to avoid the Japanese bases in the Carolines. In the Torres Straits off Australia a Dutch cruiser picked up the job and convoyed the liner to Singapore.

I left San Francisco on July 8 aboard a Pan American Airways Clipper with Owen Lattimore, special political advisor to the Generalissimo, as a traveling companion. Just before we left, I received confirmation of presidential approval for the second American Volunteer Group of bombers with a schedule of one hundred pilots and 181 gunners and radiomen to arrive in China by November 1941 and an equal number to follow in January 1942. As the big flying boat roared into the air over San Francisco Bay, I settled comfortably in my seat, confident for the first time in my battle against the Japanese that I had everything I needed to defeat them. As we plowed on into the evening I felt sure that the blood-red setting sun sinking into the ocean ahead was symbolic.

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RETURNING to the Orient in the summer of 1941 gave me a kaleidoscopic preview of the Allied defenses that were to crumble so easily when tested a few months later. In the sixty days after leaving San Francisco, I flew more than twenty thousand miles over the Asiatic battlegrounds to weave international loose ends of the volunteer project into a tight pattern of war.

Hawaii, where my old 19th Fighter Squadron was still based, was the first stop. They were equipped with the P-40's and P-36's that were to be smashed on the ground at Wheeler Field by the Japanese attack on December 7. Howard Davidson, then commander of the Hawaii fighters and later a major general commanding the Tenth Air Force in India and Burma, met me for a few drinks between planes. Howard told me tales of woe about the P-40, including the startling intelligence that he had constant trouble due to rusting of the main thrust bearings.

After leaving Hawaii, the Clipper's cabin curtains were tightly drawn and personal cameras confiscated on grounds of military security. Actually there was little to see except goony birds on Midway, sooty terns on Wake Island, and grass shacks on Guam. Civilian workers were building crushed-coral runways on Midway, Wake, and Guam, but there were no signs anywhere of fortifications under construction or any unusual military preparations. Most of the civilian workers were later captured by the Japanese and massacred in cold blood.

In Manila I stayed with Generals George and Claggett. Both had visited China a few months before. They both endorsed the American Volunteer Group to the War Department as an excellent method of testing men and equipment. George was eager to go on to China with me and join the A.V.G. but the War Department rejected his request.



Hong Kong drowsed sleepily in the humid summer heat, apparently so familiar with the Japanese, less than a cannon shot away on the mainland, that the potential enemy bred only contempt among the crown colony's defenders. From Hong Kong I embarked on an itinerary that kept me shuttling between China, Burma, and Malaya with the great swift strides that only air travel makes possible. C.N.A.C. whisked me from Hong Kong to Chungking to report on the incredible success of the American project to the Generalissimo. Chungking was already smoking under the first summer bombings. It was still our intention to throw the A.V.G. over the Chinese capital, and the Generalissimo was impatient for the long-awaited air battles to begin. I flew west to Chengtu to arrange for transfer of ammunition and bombs from the former Russian flying school to Chungking. A Chinese Air Force transport brought me to Rangoon on July 23, where I found most of the A.V.G. P-40's still sitting in crates on the docks where they had been unloaded late in June.

My mission in Burma during those midsummer months was threefold: first to locate a place to assemble and train my group; second to beg, borrow, or steal the spare parts we would need so desperately to keep our planes flying in combat; and third to find time to whip the assortment of volunteers into a keen-edged combat group.

The three-month wrangle in Washington forced abandonment of the original plans to train the group at Kunming during the dry sunny spring and have them ready to fight over Chungking when the first clear summer days broke over the capital. The resultant delay in shipping the planes from New York made it impossible for them to reach China before the monsoon rains turned the grass-covered airfields of Yunnan into quagmires. Pawley assisted me in obtaining the loan of a paved Royal Air Force field in Burma—our only hope of training during the monsoon.

Presence of the American volunteers and their war planes in Burma posed a ticklish international problem for the British, who were then desperately engaged in Africa, the Atlantic, and over their homeland. Their official policy in the Orient was to avoid war with Japan or any provocation that might give the Japanese an excuse for further aggression. Nevertheless, once the A.V.G. arrived in Burma, the British authorities were extraordinarily helpful and stretched their policy to its limits to provide the A.V.G. with what it needed. Without British help during this prewar period it would have been almost impossible to get the A.V.G. into fighting condition. In April 1941, the British government informed Dr. Soong that the A.V.G. might assemble and

test fly its planes in Burma, but under no circumstances could actual combat training be permitted under the British flag. General P. T. Mow of the Chinese Air Force, William Pawley and his brother Ed, and myself gathered in Rangoon to confer with Sir Reginald Hugh Dorman-Smith, governor of Burma, his military commander, Lieutenant General D. K. McLeod, and the senior air officer Group Captain E. R. Manning. Dorman-Smith and McLeod were sympathetic and extremely helpful. However, the A.V.G. later had many disagreements with Manning, a thin, sallow Australian reservist. Manning was understandably disturbed by the advent of an irregular group such as the A.V.G. into what he regarded as his command.

General Mow argued for the Chinese that, since Japan refused to admit officially she was at war with China, the American volunteers could not legally be considered belligerents and were in fact violating no neutrality by their operations in Burma. Finally late in October, long after the A.V.G. arrived in Burma, London reversed its earlier decision and permitted full combat training with the proviso that Burmese airfields would not be used as a base to attack the Japanese or their Siamese allies.

The Rangoon conferences also produced a Chinese-government lease on the recently completed but unmanned R.A.F. Kyedaw Airdrome six miles from Toungoo, which was one hundred and seventy miles north of Rangoon on the Sittang River. The field was in the midst of the monsoon belt but had a 4,000-foot asphalt runway and teakwood barracks.

The Toungoo lease had hardly been signed when the first contingent of volunteers arrived at Rangoon on July 28. I met them on the docks and shipped them off by train to Toungoo, where Boatner Carney was hastily pitching camp. At that time Carney, who had flown down from the Kunming flying school, was my only staff officer. I recruited the rest of the staff from whatever American civilians happened to be available in India and China during the summer.

The next round of my Oriental odyssey took me to Singapore to get permission from Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham to fire P-40 guns at ground targets around Toungoo for strafing practice. British authorities in Burma were afraid that firing would stir native unrest and in any case they would not make a decision without orders from Singapore. I developed an immediate liking and respect for Sir Robert and his aide, Air Vice Marshal Pulford, who was later killed in action over Malaya. They were engaged in the almost hopeless task of building up British defenses in the Far East with a priority

on manpower and materiel then rated lower than England, the Atlantic, the Middle East, Russia, and even Iran and Iraq. Yet both Brooke-Popham and Pulford did everything they could to bolster the A.V.G. even to offering us a portion of their own extremely meager personnel and equipment.

I was disturbed by the natural feeling of many R.A.F. officers at Singapore that the Japanese offered no cause for concern in combat. After their experiences in the Battle of Britain the R.A.F. pilots felt confident they could handle the Japanese airmen. British intelligence was then as bad as that of the United States, and as a result the R.A.F. had no real knowledge of Japanese equipment or air tactics.

An urgent summons from the Generalissimo whisked me back to Chungking in time for the worst bombings of my life. The Japanese were hurling a hundred and fifty planes a day at the undefended capital, in a final effort to force Chinese surrender before the big drive to the south began. They were also using Chungking for final combat training of the air regiments that were soon to sweep the Pacific skies from Hawaii to Singapore. I landed at Chungking on August 8 and went through two raids trying to reach the Generalissimo's headquarters outside the city. One raid caught me in midstream aboard a Yangtze ferry. The next day I dodged between three raids to confer with the American, British, and Russian military attachés and arose at 2 A.M. the next morning to make the long trip by sedan chair from the home of the British military attaché, where I was staying, to the C.N.A.C. airfield before dawn. We were still on the way at daylight when the first Japanese bombers disgorged. As the second wave bombed, the chair-carrying coolies dropped me and scuttled off among the rice paddies. I walked as far as the ferry landing on the south bank of the river and took the third raid of the morning, sitting on an overturned boat. Chungking was completely deserted. Not even a dog was stirring in the streets. Finally a Chinese in a rowboat appeared from upstream and ferried me across the river. The boatman wanted fifty Chinese dollars for the job. Rummaging through my pockets, I could find only five Chinese dollars plus an assortment of American dollars and Indian rupees. Our wrangling over *wu* (five) and *wushi* (fifty) drew a crowd out of the air-raid-shelter caves cut into the rocky river bank. An English-speaking Chinese appeared from the crowd and offered to mediate. I gave him my card. He read the card, which explained that I was a foreign military adviser to the government, to the crowd and made a lengthy speech. The crowd applauded, and the boatman departed without

any further claims. I walked on through the city toward the C.N.A.C. office to find out if I had missed the plane. The only person I met in the streets was Arthur Young, an American who was then financial adviser to the Chinese government. He was driving to the safety of the country but ordered his chauffeur to take me to the C.N.A.C. office before returning to pick him up. C.N.A.C. clerks informed me that the plane had turned back at the first air-raid alarm and "no come back."

I drove on to Dr. Rape's compound rather than recross the Yangtze, but they had left for the country, leaving only a cook and an ancient Chinese amah who refused to leave. The bombings began again and went on almost without interruption, day and night for seventy-two hours. Phone and electricity lines were cut. There was no water and only cold rice to eat. The second day a stick of bombs smashed nearby, scattering steel splinters into the compound and driving us into the dugout on a nearby hillside. I sat there listening to the intermittent thunder of the bombs, more angry than ever before as I thought of the delays that had made it impossible to hurl the American volunteers into this battle and prevent what turned out to be the final ordeal of Chungking. There was small satisfaction then in knowing that the planes and pilots capable of smashing the Japanese air effort in China were already in Asia. It was August 22 before I could get clear of bomb-spattered Chungking and return to Toungoo to meet most of the American volunteers for the first time. The camp at Kyedaw was seething with griping and unrest when I arrived. My first business was to accept the resignations of five pilots who were eager to return to the United States and air-line jobs.

Toungoo was a shocking contrast to a peacetime Army or Navy post in the United States. The runway was surrounded by quagmire and pestilential jungle. Matted masses of rotting vegetation carpeted the jungle and filled the air with a sour, sickening smell. Torrential monsoon rains and thunderstorms alternated with torrid heat to give the atmosphere the texture of a Turkish bath. Dampness and green mold penetrated everywhere. The food, provided by a Burmese mess contractor, was terrible, and one of the principal causes of group griping.

Barracks were new and well ventilated, but along with the air came every stinging insect in Burma. There were no screens or electric lights and not a foot of screening to be bought in all Burma. We learned that the R.A.F. abandoned Kyedaw during the rainy season because Europeans were unable to survive its foul climate. Thanks

to the abundance of medical supplies authorized by Dr. Soong and the work of our three-man medical staff—Doctors Tom Gentry, Lewis Richards, and Sam Prevo—we survived training in this pesthole without serious illness. When Brooke-Popham inspected the A.V.G. at Kyedaw, his first concern was for our sick list. He inspected the large R.A.F.-built hospital before he looked at the planes and was amazed to find only a single patient—a mechanic who had had his tonsils removed the day before.

Pawley finally provided three Americans and some Chinese mechanics from his Loi-Wing factory to assemble the A.V.G. P-40's at Mingaladon airdrome near Rangoon, but all radios, oxygen equipment, and armament had to be installed by group mechanics at Toungoo.

During one of the periodic British inspections of Kyedaw, Air Vice Marshal Pulford visited me and exclaimed, "This is incredible. Less than a month ago you arrived on the docks at Rangoon with only a brief case, and now you have a fighter group ready to fight."

I assured Pulford that we were far from ready to fight. Ahead lay an arduous training period during which I had to teach my pilots all the tricks of their enemy—how to use their own equipment to the best advantage, and how to fight and live to fight again another day. This last factor was extremely important since, with a group so small and replacements so uncertain, we simply had to reduce our own combat losses well below average, at the same time boosting the enemy's high above what he was prepared to absorb. It was no easy task.

While the planes were being readied for combat, we began final pilot training. It was a rude shock to some of the A.V.G. pilots when they matriculated in my postgraduate school of fighter tactics at Toungoo. Most of them considered themselves extremely hot pilots. After a long sea voyage bragging to fellow passengers about their prowess as fighter pilots, many of them were convinced they were ready to walk down the gangplank at Rangoon and begin decimating the Japanese Air Force. Some were highly skeptical of what a "beat-up old Army captain" who had been "buried in China" for years could teach youths fresh from official fonts of military knowledge. But I had been working on my plans to whip the Japanese in the air for four years, and I was determined that, when the American Volunteer Group went into battle, it would be using tactics based on that bitter experience.

Pilots looked far from promising as they checked in at Kyedaw. The long boat trip and Dutch shipboard menus had left many flabby and overweight. They all appeared wilted during their introduction

to the humid monsoon heat. Field transportation was cut to a minimum to keep them walking and sweating; regular schedules of baseball, volleyball, and calisthenics were instituted to whip them back into good physical condition.

Their flying records were not impressive. I wanted pilots between twenty-three and twenty-eight with at least three years of experience in fighter planes. Only a dozen met these standards and had ever seen a P-40. More than half the pilots had never flown fighters. We had everything from four-engine Flying Fortress pilots to Navy torpedo bombers. Louis Hoffmann, the oldest, was a forty-three-year-old Navy veteran and had almost as much fighter time as I had. Henry Gilbert, the youngest, had just turned twenty-one and was fresh from Army flying school. Of the hundred and ten pilots who reached Toungoo, four were marines, with the rest about equally divided between Army and Navy. There was always some joshing about the respective services but never any of the bitter interservice rivalry in the A.V.G. that was so evident later in the war.

We began at Toungoo with a kindergarten for teaching bomber pilots how to fly fighters. Some learned fast and well. Bob Neale and David "Tex" Hill, both Navy dive-bomber pilots, had the best combat records in the A.V.G. George Burgard and Charley Bond, both Flying Fortress pilots, ranked among the first ten. For others it was a long, tedious, and unsatisfactory process. Many multi-engined pilots had trouble getting used to the hundred-mile-per-hour landing speed and violent maneuvers of the P-40. One morning I watched them crack up six P-40's in landing—heavier losses than the A.V.G. ever suffered in a day's combat. It reminded me of the Italian-trained Chinese pilots. While I was issuing orders to cancel flying for the rest of the day, a mechanic, bicycling while watching a wreck, crashed into a parked plane, tearing a piece off the aileron and putting the seventh plane of the day out of commission. Kindergarten got a long lecture on landings that afternoon. To emphasize the point, a white line was chalked marking one third of the runway length and a fifty-dollar fine slapped on any pilot who touched his wheels beyond the line. Our training program went on long after combat began. As late as March 1942, after the group had been fighting for nearly four months, we still had eighteen pilots classified as not ready for combat. No matter how pressing the immediate needs of combat I refused to throw a pilot into the fray until I was personally satisfied that he was properly trained. That is probably one of the main

reasons Japanese pilots were able to kill only four A.V.G. pilots in six months of air combat.

Our Toungoo routine began at 6 A.M. with a lecture in a teakwood classroom near the field, where I held forth with blackboard, maps, and mimeographed textbooks. All my life I have been a teacher, ranging from the one-room schools of rural Louisiana to director of one of the largest Air Corps flying schools, but I believe that the best teaching of my career was done in that teakwood shack at Toungoo, where the assortment of American volunteers turned into the world-famous Flying Tigers, whose aerial combat record has never been equaled by a group of comparable size.

Every pilot who arrived before September 15 got seventy-two hours of lectures in addition to sixty hours of specialized flying. I gave the pilots a lesson in the geography of Asia that they all needed badly, told them something of the war in China, and how the Chinese air-raid warning net worked.

I taught them all I knew about the Japanese. Day after day there were lectures from my notebooks, filled during the previous four years of combat. All of the bitter experience from Nanking to Chungking was poured out in those lectures. Captured Japanese flying and staff manuals, translated into English by the Chinese, served as textbooks. From these manuals the American pilots learned more about Japanese tactics than any single Japanese pilot ever knew.

"You will face Japanese pilots superbly trained in mechanical flying," I told them. "They have been drilled for hundreds of hours in flying precise formations and rehearsing set tactics for each situation they may encounter. Japanese pilots fly by the book, and these are the books they use. Study them, and you will always be one jump ahead of the enemy.

"They have plenty of guts but lack initiative and judgment. They go into battle with a set tactical plan and follow it no matter what happens. Bombers will hold their formations until they are all shot down. Fighters always try the same tricks over and over again. God help the American pilot who tries to fight them according to their plans.

"The object of our tactics is to break up their formations and make them fight according to our style. Once the Japanese are forced to deviate from their plan, they are in trouble. Their rigid air discipline can be used as a powerful weapon against them."

I went into detail on the construction, performance, and armament of the Japanese planes, filling in many of the blanks in the War

Department manuals. Mimeographed sheets containing drawings, specifications, and performance data on the famous Model Zero navy fighter (Zeke) were passed out to each pilot. Shortly thereafter a few more pilots submitted their resignations. I drew diagrams of the Japanese planes on the blackboard, circling vital spots—oil coolers, oxygen storage, gas tanks, and bomb bays—in colored chalk. Erasing the colored circles, a pilot would be asked to step up and redraw them from memory. My methods were simple and direct, with plenty of repetition to make the lessons stick. In a fight you seldom have time to think, and it is training and reflexes that count.

Then I went into the tactics I had devised to pit the P-40 against the Japanese fighters and bombers.

"You must use the strong points of your equipment against the weak points of the enemy. Each type of plane has its own strength and weakness. The pilot who can turn his advantages against the enemy's weakness will win every time. You can count on a higher top speed, faster dive, and superior firepower. The Jap fighters have a faster rate of climb, higher ceiling, and better maneuverability. They can turn on a dime and climb almost straight up. If they can get you into a turning combat, they are deadly.

"Use your speed and diving power to make a pass, shoot and break away. You have the edge in that kind of combat. All your advantages are brought to bear on the Japanese deficiencies. Close your range, fire, and dive away. Never stay within range of the Jap's defensive firepower any longer than you need to deliver an accurate burst."

I harped on accurate gunnery.

"You need to sharpen your shooting eye. Nobody ever gets too good at gunnery. The more Japs you get with your first burst, the fewer there are to jump you later. Accurate fire saves ammunition. Your plane carries a limited number of bullets. There is nothing worse than finding yourself in a fight with empty guns."

Day after day I drew diagrams, lectured, and always repeated, "Fight in pairs. Make every bullet count. Never try to get all the Japanese in one pass. Hit hard, break clean, and get position for another pass. Never worry about what's going to happen next, or it will happen to you. Keep looking around. You can lick the Japanese without getting hurt if you use your heads and are careful. Follow them home. They are usually low on gas and ammunition when they break off and head for home. If they maneuver or open full throttle, they will not get back."

The A.V.G. tactics of shooting and diving away were the subject



of considerable amusement. At Rangoon the R.A.F. 221st Group posted a notice that any R.A.F. pilot seen diving away from a fight would be subject to court-martial. In the Chinese Air Force the penalty for the same offense was a firing squad. Many of the American pilots had been educated in the tail-chasing dogfight and had little enthusiasm for the shoot-and-dive tactics until after their first fight.

Later there was ample opportunity for comparison. The A.V.G. and R.A.F. fought side by side over Rangoon with comparable numbers, equipment, and courage against the same odds. The R.A.F. barely broke even against the Japanese, while the Americans rolled up a 15 to 1 score. In February 1942 the Japanese threw heavy raids against Rangoon and Port Darwin, Australia, in the same week. Over Rangoon five A.V.G. pilots in P-40's shot down 17 out of 70 enemy raiders without loss. Over Darwin 11 out of 12 U.S. Army Air Forces P-40's were shot down by a similar Japanese force. A few weeks later a crack R.A.F. Spitfire squadron was rushed to Australia from Europe and lost 17 out of 27 pilots over Darwin in two raids. The Spitfire was far superior to the P-40 as a combat plane. It was simply a matter of tactics. The R.A.F. pilots were trained in methods that were excellent against German and Italian equipment but suicide against the acrobatic Japs. The only American squadron in China that the Japanese ever liked to fight was a P-38 squadron that had fought in North Africa and refused to change its tactics against the Japanese.

During the first year of the war the A.V.G. tactics were spread throughout the Army and Navy by intelligence reports and returning A.V.G. veterans. At least one Navy commander in the Pacific and an Air Forces colonel with the Fifth Air Force in Australia were later decorated for "inventing" what were originally the A.V.G. tactics.

To polish these tactics, every pilot went through sixty hours of specialized flying. Most of the flying was done immediately after lectures in the cool of the morning before the monsoon thunderstorms swept up the Sittang Valley. Pilots went aloft to dogfight while I watched from a rickety bamboo control tower with field glasses and microphone. I coached each pilot as though he were the star half-back on our football team. Over the field radio I gave him a running commentary on his flying and dictated additional notes to my secretary, Tom Trumble of Lincoln, Nebraska, who served me well in China for four years. On the ground I went over these notes with the pilot, giving him a detailed critique of his flying and tactics and prescribing specific practice methods to bolster his weak spots.

Later I sent pilots up in pairs flying together to give mutual support

with one plane always protecting the other's tail. Finally we did squadron formation work, practicing attacks on bombers and strafing against ground targets. I still planned to use the A.V.G. as a group with one squadron for initial attack, the second for support, and the third for the decisive airborne reserve to enter battle at the critical moment. There had never been an air battle in which airborne planes were used as reserves in the manner that ground forces poised their reserves to try for decisive blows. I was sure I could do it with my fighter group against the Japanese. Unfortunately I never got the chance.

During the training period at Toungoo we lost our first planes and buried our first dead in the cemetery of St. Lukes, Church of England. Jack Armstrong of Hutchinson, Kansas, was killed in a mid-air collision with another P-40, while dogfighting. Max Hammer, of Cairo, Illinois, crashed to his death in a monsoon storm while trying to grope his way back to the field. Peter Atkinson of Martinsburg, West Virginia, died when his propeller governor gave way and tore his plane apart in a screaming power dive.

The pilots had as little regard for Curtiss-Wright's P-40 at Toungoo as I did, but for different reasons. My main complaints were the vulnerability of its liquid-cooled engine in combat and its lack of drop-pable auxiliary fuel tanks and bomb racks. Before the pilots left the United States, the P-40 had acquired a reputation as a killer in the hands of relatively inexperienced pilots. The pilots' knowledge of the plane was based almost entirely on the crop of rumors then sprouting at military flying fields on the erratic flying qualities, hot landing speeds, and inferior power plant of the P-40. Most of them were convinced it was a "no-good" combat airplane. When they passed through Surabaya, Singapore, and Rangoon and saw the Dutch and British equipped with American-made Brewster Buffaloes they muttered darkly that "it was a helluva note that Americans had to fight in second-rate planes because all the best were going to the British and Dutch under lend-lease." When R.A.F. pilots flew Buffaloes to Toungoo there was little enthusiasm for mock dogfights with them. Actually the Buffalo was inferior to the P-40 in every respect, particularly rate of climb and armament, where it carried only two .30-caliber machine guns against the four .30's and two .50's of the P-40. Finally R.A.F. taunts grew too pointed to ignore, and a dogfight was arranged between Erik Shilling, of Washington, D.C., and an R.A.F. pilot in a Buffalo. Much to everybody's astonishment, Shilling flew rings around his opponent. Later when the Americans saw the Buffa-

loes drop like flies under the Japanese onslaught over Rangoon, P-40 stock rose until finally A.V.G. pilots refused an R.A.F. offer to trade Hawker Hurricanes for P-40's.

By early fall word of the A.V.G. activities at Toungoo had filtered around the Orient, and we were plagued by a succession of visits from American and British officers and newspaper correspondents. We had no personnel available to glad-hand visitors and little time to explain what was going on. We offered them the run of the field with quarters and food similar to our own. It didn't require an F.B.I. sleuth to discover that there was no military discipline on the ground, that we had no spare parts for either plane or engines, and that some original volunteers had quit in fear or disgust. The barracks at Kyedaw Field during the training period had much of the atmosphere of a college campus on the eve of a homecoming football game. One distinguished foreign correspondent for a large American newspaper was greeted with a shower of empty beer bottles as he approached the barracks. On one occasion Dr. Tom Gentry was aroused after midnight to take several stitches in the skull of a pilot who was unfortunately selected to be crowned king of Toungoo by his fellows with a glass water pitcher. There was always considerable after-hours roughhousing and violent griping about almost everything.

My ideas on how to handle a group of high-spirited, adventurous volunteer fighter pilots and ground crews departed radically from military tradition. For rigid military discipline I tried to substitute a measure of simple American democratic principles. Rigid discipline was confined to the air and combat matters. On the ground we tried to live as nearly as possible under the circumstances as a normal American community. Most of the problems of group living were solved by majority rule after discussions in open meetings. Everybody was free to gripe and voice his opinions. We met regularly once a week for that purpose and to formulate high policy on how long the bar should remain open, when all lights were to go out, and other weighty matters. We had no guardhouse, and no salutes were required. If somebody cared to salute me, I always returned it. There were some who always saluted. For minor infractions of the CAMCO contract provisions, there was a system of fines ranging up to \$100 administered by a board of staff officers and squadron leaders.

My handling of the A.V.G. in this manner was not calculated to inspire anything but distrust in the orthodox military mind. The military observers regarded the group as an undisciplined mob. Official reports that went back to London and Washington and circulated

around Rangoon were pretty bad. Probably the worst report was made by Colonel Ross Hoyt and Major Roy Grusenbergh, of the American Military Mission to China, who were far too conventional to approve an unorthodox organization such as the A.V.G. and much too inexperienced to have any understanding of the value of our specialized tactics. In contrast the chief of the mission Brigadier General John Magruder was helpful to us within the limits of his power.

Early in November I received a cable from Dr. Soong, "Reports to U.S. War Department state your group cannot be ready before February 1942 and will not last two weeks in combat. Your comment requested."

I replied to Soong and the Generalissimo that the group would be ready by the end of November 1941, that it would last as long as needed in combat, but that we desperately needed spare parts to keep our planes in operation.

The problem of spare parts was the most critical problem we faced and it continued to haunt me almost to the eve of V-J day. When the Chinese bought one hundred P-40B's from Curtiss-Wright, they could obtain no spare parts to go with the planes. Burdette Wright, vice-president of Curtiss-Wright, told me his firm was under orders from the Air Corps to make only completed, flyable planes and to ignore production of spare parts, without which a plane can't fly for long. It was the same basic mistake made by the *Luftwaffe* and the Japanese Air Force, who depended on entire planes for replacements rather than spare parts to repair the planes already in the field. Fortunately the Air Corps discovered its error before it became fatal. But that discovery came too late to help us. Wright informed us that we couldn't expect any P-40 spares before January 1943. Even routine training flights at Toungoo took a heavy toll of our planes. We were frantic for tail-wheel tires, electric switches, radio tubes, gun solenoids, oxygen bottles, carburetors, spark plugs, batteries, and the thousand and one other obscure but vital things that keep an airplane in the air. During the fall we beat the Oriental bushes from Chengtu to Singapore trying to beg, borrow, or steal spare parts. At one time there were more than a dozen A.V.G. men scattered from Calcutta to Manila, searching for anything that we could use. Brooke-Popham in Singapore offered us the pick of his Buffalo spares, but unfortunately they wouldn't fit P-40's.

When this became evident, I sent Joe Alsop to Singapore to see what other help could be secured from the R.A.F. Brooke-Popham and Air Marshal Pulford had nothing to give but their good offices. Alsop

suggested to Brooke-Popham that the necessary P-40 spares might be obtained from General MacArthur in Manila, with the aid of a strong letter of recommendation from the Air Chief Marshal. Brooke-Popham at once agreed, and Alsop sat up most of that night drafting the letter in the office of Colonel, later Brigadier General, Francis Brink, then U.S. Military Observer in Singapore. The next day Brooke-Popham signed this letter; Alsop was about to set off for Manila by special plane, when Pawley suddenly appeared and announced that he had been authorized by me (which he had not) to take over the discussions. Pawley took the letter prepared by Alsop and proceeded to Manila. The letter secured for us a badly needed supply of tires for our P-40's, but Pawley did not understand our situation clearly; P-40 spare parts were in short supply in Manila; and the parts which we needed just as urgently as tires were not forthcoming.

When Alsop returned to Toungoo, and informed me of Pawley's unnecessary intervention, I was more than a little annoyed. At the suggestion of General Magruder and Dr. Soong, who had meanwhile returned to China, I decided to send Alsop on to Manila to get the spare parts Pawley had failed to obtain. Meanwhile, the grant to us of tires by MacArthur was of tremendous importance, since many of our aircraft were actually grounded because their tires were worn out by training. Admiral Thomas Hart, then commander of the Asiatic Fleet, provided three Navy PBY patrol bombers to fly the tires from Manila to Singapore, whence Brooke-Popham rushed them to Rangoon by boat. This strong and tangible vote of confidence by MacArthur, Hart, and Brooke-Popham at a time when it was the military fashion to pooh-pooh the volunteers was a strong boost to my morale and one of the main props behind the subsequent combat record of the A.V.G.

The staff of China Defense Supplies, Incorporated, in Washington, particularly David Corcoran, Whiting Willauer, William Youngman, and Harry Price, did a valiant job of scouring for supplies. They finally amassed another load of P-40 spares and accessories and sent them across the Pacific via Pan American Clipper, in early December. The Clipper had just taken off from Wake Island on the morning of December 7, 1941, when word of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was received. The spare parts were dumped on Wake and replaced by civilian workers as the Clipper returned to the United States. When the Japs finally captured Wake, part of the booty was our shipment of parts. Not until March 1942, when another Pan American Clipper flew the other way around the world to reach Calcutta with two tons of incendiary ammunition and P-40 parts, did the A.V.G. get another

ounce of supplies from the United States. C.N.A.C. planes rushed the precious cargo from Calcutta to Kunming in one of the first large-scale deliveries of air cargo across the Hump between India and China.

Our troubles with the British authorities in Burma continued. Kye-daw Airfield was technically under the jurisdiction of the R.A.F. but there was a constant conflict between the military, the civil government of Burma, and native Burmese that increased difficulty of our training operations. We were forbidden to use American armed guards over our camp and equipment and forbidden to employ Burmese as guards. Natives swarmed over the field observing all our activity. The opportunities for espionage and sabotage were unlimited. Many times I saw yellow-robed Buddhist priests of a sect known to be violently anti-British and suspected of acting as Japanese agents, wandering around our planes. Often I had to chase Burmese natives out of my office as they stood inside the threshold watching me work. We finally got authority to hire unarmed Burmese guards but they were useless. Eventually Major General Bruce Scott, commander of the North Shan Army with headquarters in Toungoo, unofficially detailed armed and trustworthy Gurkha guards to keep the Burmese out of our hair.

Less important but more annoying than the lack of security were the inevitable rules laid down for us by Group Captain Manning, who stuck strictly to the letter of R.A.F. peacetime regulations. We were forbidden to alter the barracks by so much as disturbing a single board or installing a light socket without obtaining written approval from R.A.F. headquarters in Rangoon. Nearly three months were consumed in the involved negotiations necessary to get permission to build—at our own expense—a gunnery butt for bore-sighting our P-40 machine guns. No such construction was included in the R.A.F. engineer's manual, and Manning could not understand why I was so concerned over the accuracy of our guns.

Throughout our five-month stay at Toungoo we were never in radio communications with the R.A.F. in Rangoon or anywhere else in the Orient. Manning refused to give me an R.A.F. codebook or accept A.V.G. codebooks for radio communications, forcing us to rely on telegraph stations operated by native Burmese of doubtful loyalty to the British or a public long-distance telephone. I offered to send our own radio equipment and personnel to Rangoon to set up direct radio contact with Manning. Again he bluntly refused.

Due largely to the efforts of Brooke-Popham, the R.A.F. in Burma

loaned us considerable high-octane aviation gasoline, oil, and ammunition to fit the British .303-caliber guns in many of our P-40's. We were also loaned an R.A.F. aerial camera, which was hastily installed in a P-40 by R.A.F. mechanics and never returned. For nearly a year it provided all the American photo reconnaissance in Asia. Brooke-Popham and Pulford were enthusiastic backers of the volunteer project from the time of our arrival in the Orient. Early in the fall they placed high priority on shipment of aviation gasoline from the Dutch East Indies to Rangoon. As a result when war came and supplies were cut off there was a million-gallon reserve in Rangoon. In November Brooke-Popham also offered one squadron of Buffalo fighters and one squadron of Blenheim bombers, manned by R.A.F. volunteers, to serve under my command. Final negotiations for the transfer of these squadrons from Singapore were under way when the Japanese attack hit Malaya and the British needed every plane they had there. Another Briton who was extremely helpful was Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr, then British ambassador to China and later ambassador to the United States. Clark-Kerr cut through a snarl of British and Burmese red tape to permit the A.V.G. to move its equipment in Burma across the border to China without any delays from customs and local tax collectors.

Monsoon rains ended in October. But the cool dry season failed to bring its traditional relaxation. Tension in Burma mounted steadily with each new day, like the twisting of a turnbuckle, tightening nerves already taut and raw with uncertainty.

Kyedaw Airdrome was only sixty miles from the Thailand border. As early as 1939 Japanese engineers built a chain of air bases in Thailand, which were arranged to catapult a sizeable air offensive whenever the Japanese chose to occupy the fields. The Thai government, squeezed for years between the grinding millstones of British and French imperialism, made it quite clear that Japanese aid would be welcome any time it was forthcoming. All that stood between us and the Thailand fields was a lone British civil servant, manning a jungle post near the border, equipped with binoculars and a telephone.

Ever since late July I had been hammering at Manning to bolster the Burmese air-raid warning net. He was afraid to use Burmese spotters in the jungle areas that lay along the border because they were too anti-British to be trustworthy, and he had no other personnel available. Manning claimed the single spotter between Toungoo and the border provided adequate warning facilities. He promised to send

us an air-raid warning siren for the field. When it arrived it turned out to be a battered brass ship's bell.

Two radar sets reached Burma in late November and were set up at Moulmein and Rangoon, where they covered the approaches to southern Burma but gave us no protection at Toungoo. These radar stations were linked with the airdromes by civilian long-distance phone lines, manned by Burmese who often took an hour to put through an air-raid warning message.

It took no special intelligence to know that the situation was rapidly building up to the boiling point in Asia during the fall of 1941. It is impossible to assemble and equip a major military expedition in complete secrecy. The Japanese were never an exception to this rule. All of their moves down the China coast since 1937 were preceded by ample indications of their general intentions. When the United States slapped the oil embargo on Japan in the summer of 1941, it was evident to all who had been following the Sino-Japanese war closely that the Japanese would have to strike soon for oil or crawl back into their shell. During the fall there was a wealth of evidence that the Japanese preparations for the offensive were under way. In China veteran divisions were withdrawn to Japan and Formosa and replaced with Chinese puppet troops. The staging areas of Canton, Haiphong, Hainan Island, and Formosa were teeming with activity. Chinese reported major naval movements down the coast from Japan.

During November Japanese Zeros were reported for the first time on the French airfield around Saigon in southern Indo-China. Total Japanese aircraft in Indo-China rose during November from 74 to 245. Brooke-Popham reported the appearance of unidentified aircraft over Malaya at night during the final week of November. R.A.F. fighters were unable to intercept what were certainly Japanese reconnaissance planes. Brooke-Popham also sought to make aerial reconnaissance of Cam Ranh Bay in southern Indo-China where Japanese naval activity was swelling to suspicious proportions. Cam Ranh Bay proved to be the base from which the Japanese amphibious expeditions against Malaya and Siam were launched a few weeks later. R.A.F. Catalina flying boats at Singapore were too slow for the job so Brooke-Popham requested General MacArthur to do the job from the Philippines with a Boeing B-17. MacArthur regretfully replied that his orders from Washington did not permit such a mission. It was no secret that the stage was being set for a drive to the Dutch East Indies as the minimum objective and an all-out offensive to drive the Western powers from the Pacific as the maximum possibility.



I sent out first fighter patrols over the Thailand fields on October 24 and kept them under daily surveillance from then on. Our fighters would drone over Thailand at twenty thousand feet, watching for dust plumes on the fields below. In the dry season even a bicycle crossing a field raised a cloud of dust. On the few occasions our pilots spotted dust they came down for a quick look, buzzing the fields above the palm tops. On moonlight nights we kept fighter patrols aloft during the critical hours when the moon was best for bombing. From mid-November on I spent the hours of dusk and dawn in the control tower on the alert. Each evening Tom Gentry and I sat in the control tower smoking a pipe, too tense to talk, watching the white plume of a gigantic waterfall cascading down the side of the mountains far across the Sittang Valley in the direction of Thailand. When it became too dark to see the white waterfall against the mountains we climbed down to snatch a few hours of fitful sleep before beginning the vigil again in the predawn gloom of 4 A.M.

My watch in the control tower ended at 11 A.M. on the morning of December 8. Since we were on the far side of the International Date Line our calendars read one day in advance of those in Hawaii and the United States. As I walked across the field, one of our radio men dashed across the turf waving a message frantically. It was the news of Pearl Harbor intercepted from an American radio news flash. The rising tide of the Pacific war had at last engulfed the United States and overtaken our American Volunteer Group.

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MY worst fears in thirty years of flying and nearly a decade of combat came during the first weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor over the possibility of getting caught on the ground by a Japanese air assault on the A.V.G. at Toungoo. This fear had been gnawing at me ever since mid-October when the volunteer group began to take shape as a combat unit and I ordered the first aerial reconnaissance over the Japanese-built airfields in Thailand. I knew the Japanese were well informed on the condition of my group. I also knew they would have scant regard for the neutrality of Burma if they considered the A.V.G. a real menace to their activities in China. After Pearl Harbor I considered a Japanese attack on Toungoo a certainty. My only thought was to meet it with my planes in the air. During my long fight against the Japanese I constantly strove to put myself in the place of the enemy air commanders and diagnose their probable tactics. Generally my experience proved I allotted them too much credit.

Nearly half the A.V.G. men at Toungoo were Navy men and many of them had served at Pearl Harbor. I too had my own memories of Hawaii in the days when the 19th Fighter Squadron, which I commanded, was based on Ford Island as part of the air defenses of Pearl Harbor. In 1925 we experienced one of the Japanese attack scares that periodically swept the islands. It proved to be a baseless rumor. However, for three weeks I had the 19th Fighter Squadron warming up their planes in the dark of early morning. We took off before the first streaks of dawn to rendezvous over Oahu at 10,000 feet where it was already day. We patrolled the approaches to Pearl Harbor until long after sunrise hit the ground. There were no orders from my superiors to stand this alert, and our squadron took a lot of ribbing for the performance. I knew, as does every Regular Army officer, that the first responsibility of a unit commander—whether

he heads an infantry platoon or an air force—is to take measures to ensure his own unit against tactical surprise by the enemy. The transition from peace to war comes hard for civilians, but for professional soldiers there is no excuse. If I had been caught with my planes on the ground, as were the Air Corps commanders in the Philippines and in Hawaii, I could never again have looked my fellow officers squarely in the eye.

The lightness with which this cardinal military sin was excused by the American high command when committed by Regular Army officers has always seemed to me one of the more shocking aspects of the war. Americans have been prone to excuse the failings of their military leaders partly because of the glow of final victory and partly because they still lack all the facts from which to form an honest and accurate appraisal—facts that have been carefully withheld from the public under the guise of censorship allegedly necessary to military security. It is high time the American people made it their business to find out more about why the men they paid for twenty years to provide for the national defense were so pitifully unprepared for the catastrophe that nearly engulfed us all. The penalty for the failure to do so will be a new and even more disastrous Pearl Harbor.

The Japanese attack on Hawaii confronted me with an abrupt change in plans. Although my fighter squadrons at Toungoo were ready for action, other phases of the project were in a more precarious state. Except for the P-40 tires sent by General MacArthur and Admiral Hart from the Philippines, we had no spares so vitally needed to keep the planes repaired after combat. Hudson bombers for the Second American Volunteer Group were parked on Lockheed's airport at Burbank, California. They were immediately taken over by the Air Corps, and we heard no more of them until they arrived in China for the Chinese Air Force in the late summer of 1942. A sizeable group of bomber crews already at sea on their way to Burma were diverted to Australia and inducted into the U.S. Army. First shipment of replacement fighter pilots met the same fate.

Events of December 7 and 8 made it clear that the fighter group was the only salvage from all the elaborate plans that had been so painstakingly woven in Washington. Had I known then that for over a year this fighter group would be the only effective Allied air force to oppose the Japanese on the Asiatic mainland I probably would not have entered the combat with such high hopes.

It was immediately evident that both ends of the Burma Road would have to be defended from heavy air assaults since the wreck-

ing of Rangoon, the port of entry, and Kunming, the main division point in China, by air attack would offer a relatively cheap and effective means of tightening the Japanese fingers on China's throat without draining the far-flung enemy offensives in the southern Pacific. Rangoon was the only funnel through which supplies could still come to China. Kunming was the vital valve in China that controlled distribution of supplies to the Chinese armies in the field.

From the beginning there was dissension among the new Allies. The Generalissimo offered the British six divisions of his best troops and all of his heavy motorized artillery for the defense of Burma. The British spurned the offer, and Chiang's troops sat idle in Yunnan until March 1942 when the fall of Rangoon finally convinced the British they needed help. The British however showed no such reluctance over the American Volunteer Group of the Chinese Air Force. They pressed hard for transfer of the entire group to Rangoon to operate under R.A.F. command.

I opposed this transfer just as stubbornly as the British refused the help of Chinese ground troops. Early in the fall I conferred with Group Captain Manning over the aerial defense of Rangoon. He then had no warning net and only a single runway at Mingaladon, ten miles from Rangoon, on which to base his fighters. I suggested he build some dispersal fields to the west of Rangoon and fill in the gap between the new fields and the Thailand border with a network of air spotters' posts linked by special telephone and radio. With those facilities our fighters would have been able to meet the enemy over Rangoon with plenty of warning and altitude and be securely protected on the ground at fields beyond the Japs' range. I had learned early in this long game against the Japanese that it is suicide to fight air battles without adequate warning of the enemy's attacks and a main base out of his range. Manning, however, regarded his single runway within Japanese range as adequate and placed a reliance on his combination of radar and long-distance phone that was never borne out by experience. Manning had also committed the R.A.F. under his command to combat tactics that I regarded as suicidal. By serving under his command, I would have lost my own authority over the group and forced my pilots to accept his stupid orders. All during the period we were negotiating for transfer of all or a part of the A.V.G. to Rangoon, Manning refused to allow me to enter his fighter-control room or become familiar with any of the facilities that we were supposed to use jointly in the air defense of Rangoon.

We finally worked out an agreement, satisfactory to both the Generalissimo and the British, whereby one squadron of the A.V.G. would assist the R.A.F. in the defense of Rangoon with the other two squadrons to be stationed at Kunming, the China end of the Burma Road, where we had adequate warning net and dispersal fields. The Rangoon squadron remained under my direct command subject only to operational control by the senior R.A.F. officer in Burma. In this way the American pilots remained free to use their own tactics while coming under strategic direction of the R.A.F. Manning agreed to provide housing, transportation, food, and communications for the American squadron at Rangoon. This he failed to do.

The day after Pearl Harbor (December 9 by our calendar) we had half a dozen false alerts. With each new clang of the brass warning bell, Tom Trumble, my secretary, grabbed his rifle and tin hat and dashed for the slit trenches while I slung on my binoculars and trotted to the control tower. On December 10 Thailand "surrendered" to the Japanese, and enemy troops, ships, and planes poured into Bangkok to establish a base for the assault on Burma and Malaya. I sent Erik Shilling on a photo-reconnaissance mission over Bangkok in a special stripped-down P-40 equipped with an R.A.F. aerial camera. This improvised photo plane was about 18 miles per hour faster and could climb 3,000 feet higher than the average P-40, but it was completely outclassed by the speedy Japanese high-altitude photo planes that continued to do their work unmolested over Asia until the first Lockheed Lightnings (P-38) arrived in China in the summer of 1943. Escorted by Ed Rector of Marshal, North Carolina, and Bert Christman of Fort Collins, Colorado, in regular P-40's, Shilling photographed the docks and airfields of Bangkok from 28,000 feet.

When I saw his pictures, I exploded. Docks along the Menam River were jammed with enemy transports disgorging troops and supplies. Don Maung airdrome outside the city was packed with Japanese aircraft, parked wing tip to wing tip and awaiting dispersal to the chain of advanced bases closer to the Burma border. A dozen bombers could have wrecked the Japanese air offensive in twenty minutes.

This was but one of the many times during the war when a kingdom was lost for want of a few planes.

The Third A.V.G. Squadron commanded by Arvid Olson, of Hollywood, California, moved to Mingaladon airdrome on December 12 to join the R.A.F. in the defense of Rangoon. At Toungoo we en-

couraged every possible movement rumor about the rest of the group to confuse the Burmese spies while we tied up our loose ends preparatory to establishing a new base at Kunming. There were still twenty-five pilots not sufficiently trained to be turned loose in combat and a dozen P-40's under repair at Toungoo, but when the radio crackled from Kunming that the Japanese were bombing the city on December 18, it was apparent that the time to move had come.

The group was so organized that everything essential to immediate combat operations could be airborne. Permanent base personnel and supplies left Toungoo by truck convoy up the Burma Road. Three C.N.A.C. transports swooped down on Toungoo on the afternoon of the eighteenth and whisked me, my combat staff, and the oxygen, ammunition, and spare parts we needed for fighting to Kunming before dawn the next day.

The First and Second Squadrons flew from Toungoo to Kunming on the afternoon of the eighteenth with a refueling stop at Lashio. At Toungoo the First Squadron circled on patrol covering the Second Squadron's take-off, and at Kunming the roles were reversed as the Second stayed in the air until the First Squadron had landed, refueled, and was ready for combat again at Kunming.

By dawn on the nineteenth we had thirty-four P-40's ready to fight at Kunming with a fighter-control headquarters hooked into the Yunnan warning net and the Chinese code rooms that were monitoring Japanese operational radio frequencies and decoding enemy messages. For the first time since mid-October I breathed easier.

It was this kind of lightning mobility that was necessary to realize the full potential of airpower. To achieve it meant that I would always have to operate on a skeletonized basis with airmen doubling in ground duties and a few key men doing the work of an entire staff. It meant that I could never afford the excess staff personnel required by more orthodox military organizations.

It was this ability to shift my combat operations six hundred and fifty miles in an afternoon and a thousand miles in twenty-four hours that kept the Japanese off balance for four bloody years and prevented them from landing a counterpunch with their numerically superior strength that might easily have put my always meager forces out of business.

We had little strain on our patience for the first pay-off on these tactics. December 19 passed quietly with three P-40 reconnaissance patrols over southern Yunnan but no sign of life from the enemy. At 9:45 A.M. on the twentieth my special phone from the Chinese

code room rang. It was Colonel Wong Shu Ming, commander of the Chinese Fifth Air Force and Chinese chief of staff for the A.V.G. His message said, "Ten Japanese bombers crossed the Yunnan border at Laokay heading northwest."

From then on the battle unfolded over Yunnan as it had done a hundred times before in my head. Reports filtered in from the Yunnan net as the enemy bombers penetrated deeper into China.

"Heavy engine noise at station X-10."

"Unknowns overhead at station P-8."

"Noise of many above clouds at station C-23."

Position reports recorded on our fighter-control board added up to a course designed to bring the enemy bombers to about fifty miles east of Kunming, from which point they would probably begin the circling and feinting tactics designed to confuse the warning net before their final dash to the target.

I ordered the Second Squadron to make the interception. Jack Newkirk, of Scarsdale, New York, led one four-plane element in search of the bombers while Jim Howard, of St. Louis, son of former medical missionaries in China, led another four-plane formation on defensive patrol above Kunming. Sixteen planes of the First Squadron commanded by Robert Sandell, of San Antonio, Texas, were held in reserve in the stand-by area west of Kunming, ready to join the fray at the decisive moment.

I fired a red flare sending the Second and First Squadrons into the air and drove with my executive officer, Harvey Greenlaw, and interpreter, Colonel Hsu, to the great timbered clay pyramid looming above the grassy mounds of a Chinese graveyard on a gentle slope overlooking the field. This was our combat-operations shelter with a duplicate set of radio and phone communications. Inside the dark, dank interior we studied the plotting board by the light of matches held by Greenlaw while Hsu took phone reports from the Chinese net. Outside, the winter air of the Kunming plateau was crisp and clear. Scattered puffball clouds floated lazily above the city at 10,000 feet. Weather reports to the south indicated a solid overcast brushing the mountain peaks.

This was the decisive moment I had been awaiting for more than four years—American pilots in American fighter planes aided by a Chinese ground warning net about to tackle a formation of the Imperial Japanese Air Force, which was then sweeping the Pacific skies victorious everywhere. I felt that the fate of China was riding in the P-40 cockpits through the wintry sky over Yunnan. I yearned

heartily to be ten years younger and crouched in a cockpit instead of a dugout, tasting the stale rubber of an oxygen mask and peering ahead into limitless space through the cherry-red rings of a gunsight.

Suddenly voices broke through the crackling radio static.

"There they are."

"No, no, they can't be Japs."

"Look at those red balls."

"Let's get 'em."

Then maddening silence. I ordered Sandell's reserve squadron to dive to Iliang about thirty miles southeast of Kunming along the Japs' line of probable approach. There was nothing more on the radio. The Chinese net reported the bombers had reversed course and were heading back toward Indo-China. Sounds of gunfire were heard, and the heavy fall of Japanese bombs in the mountains near Iliang was reported. There was nothing to do but return to the field and wait.

Chinese were already streaming back to the city from their refuge among the grave mounds, incredulous that no bombs had fallen. Howard's patrol over Kunming came down. They had seen nothing. Newkirk's flight returned, sheepish and chagrined over a bad case of buck fever on their first contact with the enemy. They had sighted the Jap formation of ten gray twin-engined bombers about thirty miles southeast of Kunming, but for a few incredulous seconds could hardly believe the bombers were really Japs. The bombers jettisoned their bombs, put their noses down for speed, and wheeled back toward Indo-China. By the time Newkirk's flight recovered and opened fire, the bombers had too big a lead—too big that is for everybody except Ed Rector. The last the other pilots saw of Rector he was still chasing the Japs at full throttle.

Finally Sandell's squadron came straggling in. From the whistling of the wind in their open gun barrels and the slow rolls as they buzzed the field, we knew they had been in a fight. They had sighted the Jap formation in full retreat over Iliang about thirty miles southeast of Kunming, scuttling along on top of a solid overcast with Rector still in pursuit.

As the P-40's dived to attack, everybody went a little crazy with excitement. All the lessons of Toungoo were forgotten. There was no teamwork—only a wild melee in which all pilots agreed that only sheer luck kept P-40's from shooting each other. Pilots tried wild 90-degree deflection shots and other crazy tactics in the 130-mile running fight that followed. Fritz Wolf of Shawano, Wisconsin, shot down two bombers and then cursed his armorer because his guns jammed.



When he landed and inspected the guns, he found they were merely empty. When the P-40's broke off three Jap bombers had gone down in flames and the remainder were smoking in varying degrees. Ed Rector was the only A.V.G. casualty. His long chase left him short of gas, forcing him to crash-land his P-40 in a rice paddy east of Kunming with minor injuries.

Back at the field most of the pilots were too excited to speak coherently.

"Well, boys," I told the excited pilots, "it was a good job but not good enough. Next time got them all."

I herded them into the operations shack for an hour before I let them eat lunch. We went over the fight in minute detail pointing out their mistakes and advising them on how to get all the bombers next time. Not until the spring of 1945 did I learn how close Sandell's flight had come to getting all the Japs in that first fight of the A.V.G.

Lewis Bishop of De Kalb Junction, New York, an A.V.G. pilot shot down five months after the Iliang battle and taken prisoner in Indo-China, met the Japanese pilot who led the raid. The Jap said his crew had been the sole survivors of the mission. Nine of the ten bombers had failed to return.

Bishop was a prisoner of the enemy for three years. He finally escaped by jumping from a moving train in North China while being transferred from Shanghai to Manchuria. He reached me in Kunming early in 1945 to write the final footnote to the A.V.G.'s first fight.

Japanese airmen never again tried to bomb Kunming while the A.V.G. defended it. For many months afterward they sniffed about the edges of the Yunnan warning net and dropped a few bombs near the border but never ventured near Kunming. Our border patrols shot down a half dozen of these half-hearted raiders, and by the spring of 1942 we were on the offensive carrying the war deep into Indo-China with dive-bombing and strafing missions. The Japs waited until sixteen months after their first defeat to launch another mission against Kunming in the spring of 1943, when they knew I was in Washington attending the Trident Conferences of the British-American Combined Chiefs of Staff. Then they brought thirty fighters to protect their bombers.

Although the A.V.G. was blooded over China, it was the air battles over Rangoon that stamped the hallmark on its fame as the Flying Tigers. The cold statistics for the ten weeks the A.V.G. served at Rangoon show its strength varied between twenty and five serviceable P-40's. This tiny force met a total of a thousand-odd Japanese aircraft

over southern Burma and Thailand. In 31 encounters they destroyed 217 enemy planes and probably destroyed 43. Our losses in combat were four pilots killed in the air, one killed while strafing, and one taken prisoner. Sixteen P-40's were destroyed. During the same period the R.A.F., fighting side by side with the A.V.G., destroyed 74 enemy planes, probably destroyed 33, with a loss of 22 Buffaloes and Hurricanes.

Winston Churchill, then prime minister of the United Kingdom, added his eloquence to these statistics, cabling the Governor of Burma, "The victories of these Americans over the rice paddies of Burma are comparable in character if not in scope with those won by the R.A.F. over the hop fields of Kent in the Battle of Britain."

Air Vice Marshal D. F. Stevenson, who replaced Manning in January 1942, noted that while the ratio of British to German planes in the Battle of Britain had been 1 to 4, the ratio of Anglo-American fighters to Japanese planes over Rangoon was 1 to from 4 to 14.

The Japanese began their aerial assault on Rangoon with a strength of 150 fighters and bombers based on a few fields in southern Thailand. In Burma, the Allies could muster only 16 P-40's of the A.V.G., 20 Buffaloes of the R.A.F., some ancient British Lysanders of the India Air Force, and a few Tiger Moth training planes. As I anticipated, the radar-phone combination of the R.A.F. warning system failed to provide adequate warning. Many times the only warning my pilots received was a hurried phone call, "Bombers overhead," or the noise and dust of the R.A.F. Buffaloes scrambling for an alert. Numerous A.V.G. interceptions were made only after the enemy finished bombing and was leaving the target due to the inadequate warning. When the R.A.F. indicated that its only attempts to bolster the warning system consisted of providing advanced ground troops with heliographs to flash warning messages, I fought vigorously to withdraw the A.V.G. from what I considered an unnecessarily exposed position. Only the heavy pressure of the Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff and the Generalissimo prevented me from doing so.

Shortly before the Rangoon battles began, the A.V.G. suffered its final blow from William D. Pawley. The contract between Pawley and the Chinese government provided that I could call on Pawley's Central Aircraft Manufacturing Company for technical personnel, tools, and materials for repairing damaged P-40's of the A.V.G. At a conference with General Chow, chief of the Chinese Aeronautical Commission, in September it was agreed that all A.V.G. repair work west of the Salween River would be handled by CAMCO's Loi-Wing

plant, located in Yunnan just across the Burma border, while the Chinese Air Force repair shop in Kunming would do all servicing east of the Salween.

As damaged planes began to pile up during training at Toungoo, I made repeated requests to Pawley for men and materials from his Loi-Wing plant to repair them. A few CAMCO men were sent to Toungoo but it was decided to do only emergency work there and to ship badly damaged planes over the Burma railroad to Lashio and thence by truck to the Loi-Wing factory. A number of P-40's were shipped to Loi-Wing, but after they arrived, little work was done on them.

CAMCO was engaged in the assembly of Curtiss-Wright Model 21 fighters and some trainers, which Pawley had already sold to the Chinese government. Pawley claimed that repairing A.V.G. planes interfered with his assembly program. I argued that repair of proven combat planes for experienced pilots rated higher priority than the assembly of trainers and experimental fighters. We also disagreed over the need for an A.V.G. squadron to be stationed at Loi-Wing for the protection of his factory. At that time the possibility of enemy air action against Loi-Wing was too remote to be considered seriously.

In mid-December Pawley issued an order to his American employees at Loi-Wing, forbidding them to touch an A.V.G. plane, and followed this with a radio to me that, as of January 1, CAMCO would do no more repair work on A.V.G. P-40's. I replied that Pawley's inability to do this work was regretted, but we would manage without him.

Loss of the CAMCO repair base was a serious blow to the group since we were already fighting over Rangoon. I took the matter to the Generalissimo in Chungking. He ordered the Chinese manager of CAMCO, Colonel Chen, to continue repairing A.V.G. planes. Chen did an excellent job for us until the plant was burned and abandoned in the face of the Japanese advance into Yunnan. The Chinese government acquired Pawley's interest in CAMCO, and he flew off to India where he had already begun construction of another aircraft plant.

I have always suspected that Pawley, like the Japanese, thoroughly believed the British and American intelligence reports that the A.V.G. would not last three weeks in combat. At any rate on the occasions when he had a chance to provide the A.V.G. with badly needed assistance, Pawley exhibited what I considered a remarkable lack of co-operation. It was only after the A.V.G.'s combat record had made

the organization world famous that Pawley made strenuous efforts to have himself identified with it, even to the extent of attempting to secure an honorary membership of the Flying Tigers Incorporated, the only authentic postwar organization of former A.V.G. men, by offering a ten-thousand-dollar contribution to the corporation's funds. His offer was flatly rejected by the membership, who apparently felt that a few repaired P-40's during the dark days of 1941-42 would have been more valuable to them than a postwar check. After a succession of wartime manufacturing ventures, Pawley embarked on a diplomatic career as ambassador to Peru and Brazil. No doubt he found the Medal for Merit awarded him for "organizing the Flying Tigers" useful in his new work.

Two days before Christmas the Japanese shot their first aerial bolt against Rangoon with 54 bombers escorted by 20 fighters. The low fighter-bomber ratio indicated that the Japanese were confident and expected little trouble from the Allied air defense. There was no warning at Mingaladon. The Third Squadron was casually ordered to clear the field. While still climbing they were informed by R.A.F. fighter control, "Enemy approaching from the east."

The Japanese had finished bombing and were on their way home before the A.V.G. sighted the formation. Jap fighters were diving on the city, strafing the crowds of civilians who jammed the streets to watch the raid. One bomber formation hit Mingaladon Field, and the other laid their eggs along the docks. In the brief fight that followed, the Americans shot down six Japanese planes and lost two of their own pilots—Neil Martin of Texarkana, Arkansas, riddled by a quartet of Jap fighters, and Henry Gilbert of Bremerton, Washington, blown up by the top-turret fire of the bomber formations. The R.A.F. failed to make contact.

This raid put the torch of panic to Rangoon. Those who were rich enough to do so fled for their lives to India. Native Burmese rioted, looted, and began potting stray Britons. All the native cooks and servants fled from Mingaladon, leaving the A.V.G. without a mess. For two days they lived mainly on stale bread and canned beer, of which there seemed to be an ample stock.

On a cloudless Christmas day with the temperature at 115 degrees in the sun the Japanese came back to finish off Rangoon. They figured 60 bombers and 30 fighters would be ample for the job. This time 12 P-40's were waiting at altitude and sailed into the Japanese formations as they droned toward the city. "Like rowboats attacking the

Spanish Armada," one observer on the ground described the attack. The R.A.F. put 16 Buffaloes into the fray later.

"It was like shooting ducks," Squadron Leader Olson radioed me at Kunming. "We got 15 bombers and 9 fighters. Could put entire Jap force out of commission with whole group here."

A.V.G. losses were 2 planes. Both pilots bailed out safely. The R.A.F. got 7 Jap planes and lost 9 Buffaloes and 6 pilots.

William Pawley happened to be in Rangoon that memorable Christmas and apparently suffered a slight change of heart in his attitude toward the A.V.G. He loaded a truck full of food and drink in Rangoon and drove it to Mingaladon to present the Third Squadron with Christmas dinner. Under the shade of banyan trees around the airport rim, with the smoke of burning Japanese wrecks still rising from the jungles beyond, the Third Squadron squatted to a dinner of ham and chicken liberally lubricated by beer and Scotch. The rest of the group, eight hundred miles to the north on the frosty Kunming plateau, dined on Yunnan duck and rice wine.

After the Christmas battle, the Third Squadron had only 11 serviceable P-40's left. Olson radioed for help, and I sent the Second Squadron, led by Newkirk, to relieve him. By the first week in January the transfer was completed, and the pattern of the Japanese effort against Rangoon became apparent.

While they gathered strength for another mass daylight assault, the Japanese sent night bombers to harass Rangoon, slipping in singly all night long to gain maximum nuisance value. A.V.G. efforts to halt them were unsuccessful, but the R.A.F. bagged several. Meanwhile the A.V.G. took the offensive, prowling the enemy fields in Thailand to smash their planes on the ground. Newkirk and "Tex" Hill led many of these early strafing attacks on the Jap airfields.

While the A.V.G. P-40's fought to keep the port of Rangoon open, our ground crews were working like beavers on the docks loading truck convoys with lend-lease equipment for shipment up the Burma Road to China. It was during this period, with the hot breath of the Japanese blowing on our necks, that the Burma Road first delivered twenty thousand tons a month to China. These supplies, trucked out of Burma before the fall of Rangoon, enabled the A.V.G. to continue operations in China long after every land line of communication with that unhappy land had been severed by the enemy. Every type of A.V.G. nonflying personnel, including our chaplain, Paul Frillman, of Maywood, Illinois, sweated like coolies on the Rangoon docks during those hectic weeks.

By the last week in January the Japanese were ready for another knockout attempt on Rangoon. From January 23 to 28 six major attacks of up to one hundred planes each rolled over the Burmese port. It was a tribute to the Anglo-American fighter pilots that the Japanese formations had switched to a three-to-one ratio of fighters protecting small bomber formations.

On January 23 and 24 the Japanese tried to floor the A.V.G. with a series of one-two punches. They led with a fighter sweep designed to get the Allied fighters into the air and use up their fuel. Then a second wave was scheduled to deliver the knockout punch while the A.V.G. and R.A.F. were on the ground refueling. It was a good plan but it didn't work. A.V.G. ground crews were too fast on refueling and rearming the P-40's and had them ready to fight again before the second wave of Japs appeared. By January 28 the Japs were sending over only large fighter formations, and the score for this offensive stood at 50 Jap planes destroyed against a loss of 2 A.V.G. pilots and 10 R.A.F. pilots killed.

Newkirk radioed Kunming, "The more hardships, work, and fighting the men have to do the higher our morale goes. Squadron spirit really strong now."

However strong the Second Squadron's spirit, they were down to ten P-40's, so I sent Bob Sandell and his First Squadron to take up the burden at Rangoon. The Japanese ground offensive into Burma had begun to roll during the last weeks in January, and it was evident that the British had neither the men, equipment, nor leadership to stop it.

Before I left the United States in the summer of 1941 I asked a few friends in Louisiana to watch the newspapers and send me any clippings about the A.V.G. Now I was being swamped with clippings from stateside newspapers, and my men were astonished to find themselves world famous as the Flying Tigers. The insignia we made famous was by no means original with the A.V.G. Our pilots copied the shark-tooth design on their P-40's noses from a colored illustration in the *India Illustrated Weekly* depicting an R.A.F. squadron in the Libyan desert with shark-nosed P-40's. Even before that the German Air Force painted shark's teeth on some of its Messerschmitt 210 fighters. With the pointed nose of a liquid-cooled engine it was an apt and fearsome design. How the term Flying Tigers was derived from the shark-nosed P-40's I never will know. At any rate we were somewhat surprised to find ourselves billed under that name. It was not until just before the A.V.G. was disbanded that we had any kind

of group insignia. At the request of China Defense Supplies in Washington, Roy Williams of the Walt Disney organization in Hollywood designed our insignia consisting of a winged tiger flying through a large V for victory.

Although the Flying Tiger victories made ready front-page copy for an Allied world rocked by a series of shattering defeats, I noticed too much tendency to attribute our success to sheer derring-do or some mystical quality that made an American in the air the equal of ten foemen and not enough on the solid facts on which our triumphs were really based.

Whatever its later shortcomings, the Curtiss-Wright P-40 was an excellent fighter for the battles over Rangoon, all of which were fought below 20,000 feet. At those altitudes the P-40 was better than a Hurricane and at its best against the Japanese Army Nates and Navy Model Zeros. The two .50-caliber machine guns gave the P-40 a heavy, fast-firing gun that neither the British nor Japs could match. Pilot armor saved many a P-40 pilot's life, and the heavy rugged construction, though a disadvantage in maneuverability, was certainly an advantage in field maintenance and putting damaged planes back into battle. P-40's could be repaired after damage that would have made a Japanese plane a total loss.

The ground crews were a vital factor that most newspaper correspondents on the spot overlooked. It was the speed with which the ground crews repaired, refueled, and rearmed the P-40's that kept the A.V.G. from being floored by the Japanese one-two punches. The ground crews displayed ingenuity and energy in repairing battle-damaged P-40's that I have seldom seen equaled and never excelled. Their performance at Rangoon was in many ways symbolic, for in all the long years of the war to come, it was American maintenance that was one of the keystones in our eventual arch of triumph. Until the very end of the Rangoon holocaust our ground crews managed to keep a minimum of 10 P-40's ready to fight every day. In contrast the R.A.F. commander, Air Vice Marshal Stevenson, complained of his maintenance men who allowed a squadron of 30 Hurricanes arriving in January to slump to 11 planes fit for combat by mid-February and only 6 by March. I had never favored liquid-cooled engines for combat planes but the Allison engines in our P-40's certainly did more than the manufacturer claimed for them.

Our leadership at Rangoon was also superior. All of the six squadron leaders who saw action there—Olson; Sandell and Newkirk before they were killed; "Tex" Hill of Hunt, Texas; and Bob Neale, of Seattle,



Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek with their American air adviser at the Generalissimo's Chungking villa in the summer of 1941.



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Washington, were leaders of the highest quality. It was no accident that Hill and Olson became full colonels and commanded Army Air Forces fighter groups in combat or that the A.A.F. offered a lieutenant colonelcy to Bob Neale, who entered the A.V.G. as a Navy ensign.

Above all it was the kind of teamwork that is so typically American, wherein there is plenty of scope for individual brilliance but everybody contributes toward a common goal. You can see it on an autumn Saturday afternoon in a top-notch football team. It will take the same kind of well-co-ordinated teamwork to operate a guided-missile or push-button group in the next war or to pull us through the perils of peace.

In January my annual attack of chronic bronchitis laid me low in Kunming, and a projected trip to Rangoon had to be canceled. I alternated between brief spells in my airfield office and longer sieges in my sickbed at the University of Kunming where the A.V.G. was quartered. A radio was installed near my bed, so I could listen to the radio chatter of my pilots during their fights over Rangoon. It was over this radio that I heard of the Japanese attack on Toungoo, February 4. They struck at 6 A.M. There was no warning. All personnel were asleep. The operations building and a hangar were destroyed by direct hits; three P-40's still under repair were wrecked; and half a dozen R.A.F. Blenheims burned. That might all too easily have been the fate of the entire A.V.G. eight weeks earlier.

After the fall of Singapore in mid-February, the Japanese transferred the crack air units that blasted the R.A.F. out of the Malayan air to Thailand to join the assault on Rangoon. These reinforcements boosted enemy plane strength available to attack Rangoon to four hundred planes. Before the month's end, they were hammering at the city with two hundred planes a day.

It was during this period that a handful of battered P-40's flown by Bob Neale's First Squadron pilots wrote the final lurid chapter in the A.V.G. history of Rangoon. Neale had become First Squadron leader after the death of Bob Sandell, who died flight-testing a repaired P-40 over Mingaladon. Since the fall of Rangoon was already looming, Neale no longer retained damaged planes at Mingaladon but had them flown or shipped north by rail. About this time I also ordered Neale to cease all strafing and bomber-escort missions due to the worn condition of the P-40 engines, which were long overdue for overhaul. The fact that shark-nosed planes were observed flying north and were no longer seen over Thailand airdromes or accompanying R.A.F. bombers gave rise to rumors that the A.V.G. had

left Rangoon. Neale radioed me for orders regarding the actual evacuation. I replied, "Expend equipment. Conserve personnel utmost. Retire with last bottle oxygen."

Neale took me literally. With 9 P-40's he waited for the final Japanese daylight assaults with their crack units from Singapore. R.A.F. strength had dwindled too. All the Buffaloes had been lost in combat or accidents. Thirty Hurricane reinforcements had shrunk to a dozen serviceable planes. New reinforcements of 18 Hurricanes and Spitfires being ferried from Calcutta to Rangoon cracked up in the Chin Hills with a loss of 11 pilots. When the Japanese began their final aerial assault on February 26, there were only 15 Allied fighters to meet the attack by 166 enemy planes. They fought off three raids on the twenty-fifth with the A.V.G. bagging 24 Jap planes. The next day was even worse, with 200 enemy planes over Rangoon. The A.V.G., now reduced to 6 P-40's, bagged 18 Jap fighters to bring their two-day total to 43 enemy aircraft without loss to themselves.

In those two days of almost constant air fighting Neale's detachment turned in one of the epic fighter performances of all time. With the best of equipment it would have been a brilliant victory, but under the conditions Neale and his eight pilots fought, it was an incredible feat. The report of Fritz Wolf, who left Rangoon just before the final battles began, describes those conditions well.

Planes at Rangoon are almost unflyable. Tires are chewed up and baked hard. They blow out continually. We are short on them, and battery plates are thin. When we recharge them, they wear out within a day. There is no Prestone oil coolant in Rangoon. British destroyed the battery-charging and oxygen-storage depots without any advance warning to us so we could stock up. We are completely out of auxiliary gear shifts and they are wearing out in the planes every day.

Fresh food of any kind is completely lacking. We are living out of cans. Water is hard to get. Most of the city water supply has been cut off.

Dust on the field fouls up the P-40 engines considerably. It clogs carburetion so much that it is dangerous to increase manifold pressure when the engine quits cold. Entire carburetion systems are cleaned on the ground, but they are as bad as ever after a single day's operations. This tendency of engines to quit makes it hard to dogfight or strafe. Of the eight planes that took off for an air raid two days ago, only five got off the ground.

Conditions in Rangoon are getting dangerous. Authorities have released criminals, lunatics, and lepers to fend for themselves.

Natives have broken into unguarded liquor stocks and are in a dangerous state. There are continual knifings and killings. Three British were killed near the docks a few nights ago. Stores are all closed. At least twenty-five blocks of the city are burning furiously. All fire trucks were sent up the Prome Road to Mandalay several weeks ago.

Our only contact with British intelligence was a visit from one officer about ten days ago. There seems to be little co-operation between the R.A.F. and British Army and less between the R.A.F. and us. It seems certain that the Japanese have crossed the Sittang River (only eighty miles from Rangoon), but we have had no word on it.

On the night of February 27 the R.A.F. removed the radar set from Rangoon without previous notice to the A.V.G. For Neale that was the last straw. The next morning he sent four of his remaining six P-40's to cover the route of the last A.V.G. truck convoy to leave Rangoon. He and his wingman, R. T. Smith, later an A.A.F. fighter group commander, stayed to make a final search for an A.V.G. pilot who had bailed out over the jungle some days before. Neale ripped out his own radio and enlarged the baggage compartment to hold a stretcher case in the event the pilot turned up injured. Neale and Smith sweated out February 28 waiting for news of the lost pilot, Edward Liebolt. The next day the Japanese cut the Prome Road, last land line of retreat from Rangoon. Neale and Smith jammed two cases of whisky into Neale's baggage compartment and took off for Magwe, two hundred miles to the north. Two days later the Japanese Army entered Rangoon.

The battle of southern Burma was over.

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THE battle for northern Burma was a disaster that nearly knocked China out of the war and sowed bitter seeds of dissension among the new British, Chinese, and American allies. The most tragic aspect of that bloody campaign was the utter lack of Allied unity. During the first months of the war in Burma all hopes for a united effort against the Japanese on the Asiatic mainland collapsed. To the end of the war the British, Chinese, and Americans pursued their separate ends with only the thinnest veneer of co-ordination.

American prestige was never higher in China than during the months before Pearl Harbor. Generous American contributions to United China Relief and the generally favorable American press convinced Chinese leaders and masses alike that the United States was sympathetic to their struggle for independence against the twin imperialisms of Europe and Asia. Increasing personal attention to Asiatic problems by President Franklin D. Roosevelt added concrete assistance to this sentimental support. These measures were—extension of lend-lease aid, dispatch of an American military mission, planes and pilots for the A.V.G., and the firm promise of American bombers to carry the war to Japan. Within a few months after Pearl Harbor most of this prestige was dissipated, not so much by the succession of American military defeats, as by the attitude of top-ranking American military men in the Orient, who persisted in dealing with the Chinese as a frontier cavalry commander of 1870 handled a tribe of friendly but untrustworthy Indians. Although the great mass of Chinese people to this day regard the United States as their only hope for the future, American policy as dispensed by our official representatives in Asia had provoked a growing and deep-seated skepticism among the leaders of modern China.

In the first official Sino-American contacts after the Japanese created the Anglo-Sino-American alliance there was an unfortunate tendency

of top-ranking American military men to exercise little tact in dealing with Orientals. Under the circumstances nothing could have been worse. I joined Field Marshal Sir Archibald Wavell, the supreme Allied commander in the Southwest Pacific, and Lieutenant General George Howard Brett, then top U. S. air commander in the same area, in Chungking for the first Allied conference with the Generalissimo on December 21, 1941.

The atmosphere was not especially friendly from the start, since the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang still bitterly resented the decision of the British government (taken when they were most hard pressed at home) to avoid affront to the Japanese by closing the Burma Road. The road had been reopened, but the wound still smarted. George Brett started things off badly by asking Madame, somewhat fatuously, whether she had ever heard a name more English than his. "George Howard Brett—" he kept repeating—"Can you imagine anything more British?"

"No, I can't," retorted Madame frostily, turning on her heel and leaving Brett with a view of her shapely back.

Brett failed to see the danger of giving the impression that the American leaders were in league with the British against China. As for Field Marshal Wavell, one of the finest men it was my privilege to meet during the war, he too was so preoccupied with his own grimly pressing problems that the whole psychology of the situation escaped him. China, after all, had been at war longer, had suffered far more, and had sacrificed far more, than any other ally. But Wavell had his mind fixed on the threat to Burma, and instead of giving the impression of partnership in a common cause, he let it appear that he was only interested in the extent to which he could draw upon Chinese resources for Burma's defence.

The warnings against Chinese insecurity that constantly and not always unreasonably emanated from the British and American intelligence services complicated matters further. Whereas Wavell was insistent on knowing what the Generalissimo would do for him, he was extremely reluctant to explain what the Anglo-American allies were prepared to do for the Generalissimo. Wavell refused to discuss Allied war plans. He refused also to go into the question of the China aid program. And after interminable discussion of the military problem in Burma, he announced that he would submit a report stating that the Generalissimo had agreed to provide such troops and other resources as might be needed from China. There was a real explosion, in the course of which the Generalissimo threatened to radio a tran-

script of the entire conference to President Roosevelt, in self-justification. At the time I thought the Generalissimo's anger justified, although later I came to understand the many terrible pressures, and the erroneous advance briefing, which had caused a man of Wavell's caliber to behave in what seemed so unwise and ungenerous a fashion.

Nevertheless, the Generalissimo offered two of his best Chinese armies supported by all his motorized heavy artillery for the common defense of Burma. This offer, as I have said before, was flatly rejected by the British until after the fall of southern Burma was certain. During the winter of 1941-42 I saw troops and artillery of the Chinese Fifth and Sixth Armies bivouacked in Yunnan awaiting permission from the British to fight in Burma while the A.V.G. radio in Rangoon crackled daily with reports of the crumbling British defenses. When the fall of Rangoon became imminent, the British allowed the Chinese troops to enter Burma and the gaunt, dour figure of Lieutenant General Joseph Warren Stilwell appeared again on the Asiatic scene.

Stilwell appeared to be uniquely qualified for the China post. He had served two previous tours of duty in China and spoke Mandarin moderately well. He was a long-time close personal friend of Chief of Staff George Marshall and had the unqualified support of the War Department. However, Stilwell brought with him three things that served him ill during his difficult assignment in Asia: a strong prejudice against airpower coupled with a faint suspicion of any weapon more complicated than a rifle and bayonet; a "treaty-port" attitude toward the Chinese, regarding them as inferiors incapable of managing their own affairs without foreign direction; and a complete disregard of the diplomatic facets of a top military post in a coalition war. He was also burdened by a small group of "old China hands" on his staff, whose knowledge of this vast country and its people was limited principally to the prewar view from the 13th U.S. Infantry barracks at Tientsin.

Stilwell's mission to China was certainly the toughest diplomatic job thrust on a professional soldier during the war. Even General Marshall's postwar mission to China was simple in comparison with the knotty problems that continually confronted Stilwell. He was a rugged field soldier, a man of great personal bravery, who seemed most at ease and most capable when commanding troops under enemy fire. It was his misfortune to be cast in a role for which he had neither the training nor the temperament. In this continual struggle to meet problems that were foreign to him he turned sour toward the other leaders with whom he had to work. His arrival in China late in Feb-

ruary of 1942 was universally welcomed by Chinese leaders. They were impressed with his three-star rank, his command of their language, and his appearance as a lean tough campaigner. His initial planning session on the use of Chinese troops in Burma included the Generalissimo, Madame Chiang, and myself. The Generalissimo gave him direct command of the Fifth and Sixth Chinese Armies, then advancing into north Burma. This was in fulfillment of a direct promise to President Roosevelt to allow the top-ranking American officer in China to command Chinese troops in combat. There was never any trouble between the Generalissimo and Stilwell over this issue in the beginning. It was only after the Burma debacle and its aftermath destroyed the Generalissimo's confidence in Stilwell that he steadfastly refused to give Stilwell command of any more Chinese troops and sometimes issued his own orders to those Chinese divisions still under Stilwell's nominal command.

Madame Chiang was bubbling over with good spirits after the initial conferences with Stilwell. She took Stilwell and myself by the arm and led us out onto a terrace outside the conference room. As we paced up and down the terrace arm in arm, she told us how happy she was that at last China had the help of two American military leaders, how Stilwell and I must work smoothly together, and what high hopes she had for the joint Sino-American war effort under our direction.

Stilwell presented a plan for taking the offensive with his Chinese armies in the Sittang Valley, aimed at cutting off the Japanese in Rangoon and splitting the enemy forces in Burma. The Generalissimo heartily approved Stilwell's plan with the warning that nothing must divert the Chinese from the offensive. The Generalissimo did not want his troops wasted in defensive measures but held intact for the moment when a counteroffensive could be decisive. He solemnly charged Stilwell to let nothing keep him from the offensive, and Stilwell gave the Generalissimo his promise to obey this order. This offensive was scheduled to begin about April 15. We worked out detailed plans for A.V.G. support of the Chinese armies and arranged special codes and signals to meet the needs of this first joint Sino-American effort.

Burma is a series of deep valleys running north and south and separated by rugged but not impassable mountain ranges. The valleys begin in cul-de-sacs to the north along the China-India border and broaden into river mouths and deltas in the south. During their drive on Rangoon the Japanese were faced with the job of slicing across the natural river-defense lines. But in their new offensive into



northern Burma they faced no such obstacles. Their advance followed the path of all natural communications in Burma. In early March the front was relatively static in southern Burma. The Japanese were consolidating their hold on Rangoon. Chinese held the left flank of the Allied front in the Sittang Valley around Toungoo with the British on the right in the Irrawaddy Valley, defending the road to Mandalay and the rich Yenanyang oil fields.

The British high command seemed singularly unconcerned about a Japanese thrust into northern Burma during the lull that preceded it. They thought the Japanese had all of Burma that they wanted in the port of Rangoon. However obscure the strategic possibilities of a Japanese drive into northern Burma appeared to British field commanders, they were perfectly clear to Prime Minister Winston Churchill in London, who told the House of Commons in April:

Their [the Japanese] best plan would be to push northwards from Burma into China and try to finish Chinese resistance and the great Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek. We have not yet noticed any Jap movement lately which is inconsistent with this idea and there are several which support it.

Certainly by driving China out of the war . . . Japan would be furthering her own interests. China is the only place where Japan can obtain a major decision in 1942.

After only a brief lull, the slugging match between the Japanese Air Force and the A.V.G.-R.A.F. combination continued over northern Burma. The enemy now had 14 air regiments based in southern Burma and Thailand with a strength of 420 to 500 planes. This compared with 30 serviceable fighters and a dozen Blenheim bombers of the Allied force. Battles over Rangoon were deliberate clashes between two air groups at altitude, both seeking a decision in the air. Over northern Burma the character of battle shifted to continual attempts to catch opposition on the ground and shooting sitting ducks. The Japanese had suffered too grievous losses in the air battles to want any more, and we had too few serviceable planes to deal more crippling blows to huge enemy formations in flight. This later became a characteristic of the Pacific war; the most decisive air battles were fought when attackers caught the enemy by surprise on the ground.

As usual, the A.V.G. landed the first punch in this new bout. Both R.A.F. and A.V.G. advance units were based at Magwe, an unfinished airfield about two hundred and fifty miles north of Rangoon. We still used our old training field at Toungoo, then defended by the Chinese

armies, as a refueling point to stretch the range of P-40 reconnaissance missions deep into Thailand and southern Burma.

Bill Reed of Marion, Iowa, and Ken Jernstedt of Yamhill, Oregon, were flying such a mission out of Toungoo on March 19 when they observed a new fighter strip about ten miles from the main field at Moulmein. Twenty fighters were lined up in a parking row. These two pilots made six strafing runs apiece without a shot fired against them. As they left, they counted fifteen fires burning on the field. Swinging over to the main field at Moulmein, they strafed again, burning up three bombers and a transport for the highest individual bags ever scored by A.V.G. pilots. The Japanese apparently never suspected our fighters could penetrate so deeply into their territory.

The next day an R.A.F. force of Blenheims and Hurricanes made a low-level bombing and strafing attack on our old airdrome at Mingaladon and surprised 50 enemy planes on the field. Some Zeros got into the air and badly shot up the Blenheims, but the score for the R.A.F. was 12 Zeros shot down and 16 bombers and fighters wrecked on the ground.

Stung by these two blows, the Japanese began an all-out assault on Magwe aimed at ending the Allied air effort in Burma. Conditions at Magwe were extremely favorable for surprise. The R.A.F. was using the field as an air head for evacuating some three thousand British and Indians.

My pilots reported as early as February 24, "Field here difficult for combat operations since R.A.F. using two DC-2, four Hudsons, and dozen Blenheims for evacuation of R.A.F. personnel to India. These transports are continually landing and taking off."

This traffic jam was complicated by the lack of adequate warning. The radar set evacuated from Rangoon was operating at Magwe but had been placed to cover only the southeastern approaches and would give warning only of attacks from Mingaladon. There was no ground spotters' net in the west. A single R.A.F. Blenheim circling at 10,000 feet, approximately eighty miles west of Magwe, was the only warning for thrusts from Thailand. This invitation to disaster was quickly accepted.

Shortly after noon on March 21, the Japanese attacks began. In the next twenty-five hours a total of 266 enemy aircraft, including 166 medium and heavy bombers, pounded Magwe with little opposition.

First attack by two waves of twenty-seven bombers escorted by twenty Zeros struck with two minutes' warning. Two P-40's and two Hurricanes got into the air and shot down four raiders, but the great

weight of the attack was pressed home. Bombs beat a merciless tattoo on Allied planes and personnel. Two Americans, crew-chief John Fauth, of Red Lion, Pennsylvania, and pilot Frank Swartz of Dunmore, Pennsylvania, were among a dozen badly wounded by bomb fragments. One P-40 was burned by strafing fire. Half a dozen Hurricanes were shattered, and every Blenheim bomber on the field, most of them loaded with bombs and gas, was destroyed. Fauth died on the field an hour after the raid, with the measured explosions of the last burning Blenheims booming out his funeral march. Swartz died later in an Indian hospital.

I radioed Magwe from Kunming, "Look out for follow-up raid tomorrow."

But the Japs were back almost as soon as our Magwe detachment read the radio. At 8 A.M. they struck again without any warning. Radar had been switched to cover the western approaches and picked up the enemy formation at extreme range. At this critical moment, communications between the radar post and fighter control at Magwe broke down, and the Japs roared in unannounced. Not an Allied fighter got off the ground. After the bombers finished, the Zeros came down and strafed while doing Cuban eights until their ammunition was exhausted. When the fires burned out, there were only three flyable P-40's and four out of twenty-five Hurricanes able to get into the air. The A.V.G. trio left Magwe early on the afternoon of March 22 just before the final Japanese raids began. Our ground personnel was evacuated up the Burma Road by truck. Before the end of the day the last Hurricanes had retreated to Akyab on the Bay of Bengal, where five days later an enemy surprise attack caught the entire R.A.F. force on the ground. Except for eight Hurricanes sent to join the A.V.G. at Loi-Wing, the R.A.F. effort from Burma bases ended after the twin disasters of Magwe and Akyab.

In his official report on the Burma campaign Air Vice Marshal D. F. Stevenson had this to say of the A.V.G.:

"In the Burma campaign the main brunt of the fighting was borne by the P-40 squadrons of the American Volunteer Group. They were first in the field with pilots well trained, and good fighting equipment. The great majority of enemy aircraft destroyed in Burma fell to their guns. Their gallantry in action won the admiration of both services."

Nobody who watched the R.A.F. pilots in action over southern Burma could fail to pay tribute to their bravery. The way these English, Australian, and New Zealand pilots took to the air against every aerial assault on Rangoon despite a growing realization of the inferior-

ity of their planes and the inadequacy of their tactics won the admiration of every A.V.G. pilot who fought with them. Similarly the R.A.F. pilots flew their old, slow, and lightly armed Blenheim bombers again and again on long missions deep into enemy territory with a full realization of the heavy odds against their return.

Our Magwe survivors fell back to Loi-Wing, just over the Burma border in Yunnan, while I left my sickbed in Kunming to plan a counterblow. Plots from Magwe indicated the Japanese raiders had come from the northernmost fields in the teak forests of Thailand—Chiengmai and Lampang. Until the fall of Rangoon we had kept these fields under periodic surveillance and noted little activity. At Magwe we paid heavily for this relaxed vigilance.

Pick of the First and Second Squadrons flew the revenge mission to Thailand. Bob Neale and Greg Boyington of Okanogan, Washington, led six P-40's of the First Squadron while Jack Newkirk headed the four-plane formation of the Second. Leaving Kunming on the morning of March 23, they landed at Loi-Wing to refuel. They waited until late afternoon to slip into Heho and Namsang, two R.A.F. advance fields near the Thai border. Landing there just before dusk, they refueled again, snatched a brief, fitful sleep, and took off at 4 A.M. by the light of a few truck headlights and kerosene flares. The P-40's reached the Japanese fields just after dawn illuminated their targets.

Neale's flight found the Japs at Chiengmai preparing another sortie against Magwe. More than forty fighters and bombers were lined up in neat parking rows with engines warming up and ground crews doing final work preparatory to take-off. Many pilots were near their planes. The P-40's had a field day. Not a Jap plane got off the ground. Enemy planes with a full gas load burned like phosphorus matches. Pilots and ground crews were cut down as they scampered across the bare airdrome for cover. Barracks, hangars, and fuel storage were strafed and set afire. A thick smoke pall was forming over the field as the P-40's broke off and headed for home. At least twenty burning planes were counted on the field with ten more riddled beyond repair. It was a measure of revenge for Magwe, but it cost us heavily—two of our best pilots.

Jack Newkirk's flight drew a blank at Lampang and proceeded to shoot up the Lampang-Chiengmai road on the way to join Neale's attack. A barracks was set afire. Truck convoys were strafed, and then Newkirk dived on a light-armored car. The Japs returned his fire. His wingman saw Newkirk's P-40 swerve, crash onto the road, and then burn.

William (Black Mac) McGarry, one of Neale's flight, was hit in the engine by ground fire at Chiengmai and bailed out over Thailand. He landed safely and wandered for twenty-eight days in teak forests before he saw another human. Then he welcomed even the Thai constabulary who arrested him. The Thai police never turned McGarry over to the Japs. He sat out the rest of the war in a Bangkok civil jail, jarred many times by Fourteenth Air Force bombs exploding nearby. Early in 1945, an O.S.S. mission co-operating with the Thai underground spirited McGarry back to Kunming.

Although our retaliatory offensive raid on Chiengmai cost us the services of two outstanding pilots, it was more than justified from the tactical results obtained. Later reports revealed that we had destroyed the effective strength of an entire air regiment. The survivors were withdrawn and returned to Japan for replacement of personnel and aircraft. Other Japanese air units, which had been pounding Magwe, were placed on the strict defensive at their air-dromes, and the British were able to resume the evacuation of British and Indian nationals by air from the field. Air Vice Marshal Stevenson sent me the following message: "Many thanks for the breathing spell furnished us by your magnificent attack at Chiengmai."

Our new Loi-Wing base was protected by mobile Chinese warning-net units rushed into northern Burma. Under the direction of Captains Kit and Cha of the Chinese Air Force, eighteen of these units gave Loi-Wing good warning until they were swallowed in the backwash of the Allied retreat. Loi-Wing was a fantastic touch of America nestling in a Yunnan valley with its small but precisely built aircraft factory, rows of neat white cottages, and a country clubhouse complete with a tremendous plate-glass window offering a magnificent view of the valley and a giant juke box. All this was in marked contrast to the flimsy bamboo operations shack where the Third Squadron headquartered under a hastily painted sign:

"Olson & Co.—Jap exterminators—24 hr. service."

Twenty Zeros failed to take Loi-Wing by surprise in their first thrust on April 8. Thanks to good warning we had eleven P-40's and four R.A.F. Hurricanes in the air to meet them. In an hour's fight over the field ten Japs and two Hurricanes were shot down while two parked P-40's were wrecked on the ground.

On some days atmospheric conditions caused a temporary radio blackout at Loi-Wing during the hours just before dawn. On April 10 five Zeros slipped in through this radio silence, hitting the field just after dawn, a flattering attempt to duplicate our raid at Chieng-

mai. They came in at treetop height to shoot up the field hastily and depart without doing a very thorough job.

Nine P-40's were hit, but all were flyable and back in the air at 11 A.M. when 27 bombers came back to finish the job. The bombers milled around on top of a heavy overcast while our fighters, expecting more strafers, stayed below the clouds. The bombers left without contact, but at 3 P.M. the Jap fighters were back for another low-level attack, 20 strong. Again the mixed P-40 and Hurricane formation was in the air to meet them. Eight Zeros were shot down without loss.

As April 29, the Japanese Emperor's birthday, drew near, I thought a great deal about what kind of a birthday gift his air force in Burma would offer. From the knowledge gained from my previous experiences with the Emperor's birthday celebrations, I reasoned that the Japs would expect me to be ready for them on April 29, and I suspected they might try to catch us a day early. This would also give them ample time to make the Imperial war communiqué of the twenty-ninth.

For a week before the royal birthday, twin-engine enemy reconnaissance planes were unusually active over Loi-Wing. P-40 patrols shot down four in five days, and several others escaped. On the morning of the twenty-eighth I sent a five-plane patrol into Burma to scout enemy air bases. They reported scattered enemy fighter patrols and signs of great activity along the entire air front. This confirmed my hunch that the Japanese were timing a knockout blow against Loi-Wing, to announce the end of the A.V.G. on the Emperor's birthday. All remaining P-40's were sent aloft with orders to patrol the probable route of bombers heading for Loi-Wing and to keep an eye on Lashio, a likely secondary target. To guard against the effects of enemy bombing on our single Loi-Wing runway, I instructed the flight to return after the mission to a little-used turf field at Mongshih, where the Burma Road passed through a broad deep valley.

The group was so short of oxygen that only the five planes led by "Tex" Hill to fly top cover had enough to stay above 15,000 feet for any length of time. The other ten P-40's led by Arvid Olson were stacked in two layers at 10,000 and 12,000 feet. An hour after the last P-40 disappeared over the mountains toward Burma, three U.S. Air Corps DC-3 transports landed at Loi-Wing with a load of ammunition and gas. Much as we needed their cargo, I ran onto the field and waved them away.

"Get those transports off the field," I shouted at burly Colonel Caleb

V. Haynes, pilot of the lead DC-3. "We're going to have an air raid here."

Haynes looked at the empty air-raid-warning mast in disbelief and muttered something about unloading and eating lunch. While we were arguing, the first red ball was hoisted on the air-raid-warning mast.

"One ball alert," I shouted at Haynes. "That means the bombers have been sighted on their way north."

That was enough for Haynes. He took off in a cloud of dust, remarking to his copilot, "That guy Chennault must be able to smell Japs."

Halfway between Lashio and Mandalay, "Tex" Hill spotted a V of 27 mottled-green enemy bombers following the Burma railroad tracks northward.

About the same time the Lashio radio crackled, "Japanese aircraft attacking Lashio."

Half of Olson's flight headed for Lashio while the rest combined with Hill's flight to dive on the bombers. As they closed with the Japs, the P-40 pilots saw a swarm of silvery Zeros weaving loosely above and behind the bombers.

Jap fighters tried to pull into formation as the P-40's turned into them, but they met the first attack still badly scattered. The fight exploded all over the sky as the two fighter formations clashed, leaving the bombers to drone on to Loi-Wing unmolested. There they punched a dozen holes in the runway, making it unfit for landing the rest of the day. In the running fight south of Lashio, the Olson-Hill flights shot down sixteen Zeros without loss while over Lashio the third flight bagged six more. An honest Emperor's birthday communiqué would have announced a 22-to-0 score for the A.V.G. It ranked along with the Sino-Russian celebration over Hankow in 1938 as the most fitting tribute to the Emperor in my memory.

Pilots landing at Mongshih, which was untouched by the bombers, were astonished to hear that Loi-Wing runway would be out of commission until the next morning while Chinese coolies filled in bomb craters and tamped the surface hard. Then they too were ready to believe, along with Caleb Haynes, that I could "smell Japs."

On April 29 the A.V.G. evacuated Loi-Wing in the face of a Japanese advance to Lashio. We left behind the charred remains of twenty-two P-40's that had been under repair in the Loi-Wing factory—forced to burn them because there was no way to haul them to Kunming. By the end of May 1, the first Japanese ground troops were on

the field at Loi-Wing, and the A.V.G. was operating from Paoshan and Yunnanyi.

During our last days at Loi-Wing the A.V.G. went through its only serious disciplinary crisis. Lack of military discipline, with its wartime death penalty for desertion, was the rock on which all the military "experts" predicted the A.V.G. would founder. I asserted from the start that it was possible to maintain a volunteer group in combat by other means than the threat to shoot them if they faltered. Soon after Pearl Harbor while we were still at Toungoo, the question of wartime discipline came up.

I told the group then, "It was expected that only men with experience, real specialists in their line, capable of doing their jobs under difficult circumstances, would be accepted for the American Volunteer Group. It was expected that all men employed by this streamlined organization would have sufficient military training and common sense to be self-respecting themselves and to accord the proper respect and courtesies to the men in other categories—the respect of one good workman or soldier to another. Such respect is common to all good civilian organizations and is enforced by strict regulations in military organizations. It was not anticipated that strict military rules and regulations to enforce mutual courtesy and respect among personnel of the A.V.G. would be required, and no personnel for this purpose were employed. The group commander has studiously refrained from publishing such regulations because he believes that they are not required for the great majority of the men in this group—men who have proven themselves capable, efficient, attentive to duty, and courteous."

Enforcement of the simple rules required for performance of duty, as specified in the original CAMCO contract and in regulations established by majority vote of the group, was handled by special boards, which convened from time to time, composed of senior pilots and staff officers. They heard the charges and defense and passed judgment, either levying fines or recommending action to me in the most serious cases. Checking over the A.V.G. special order file I note numerous evidences of these board rulings.

Pilot—— fined \$100 for failing to keep himself in proper physical condition.

Radioman—— fined \$200 for deserting his radio station during an operational period.

Pilot—— recommended for dishonorable discharge for continually reporting for alert duty in a state of intoxication.



Crew chief—— fined \$100 for assaulting a Chinese member of the A.V.G.

These and many others represented the judgment on group members by their comrades in arms, and I made it a point invariably to support these recommendations. It was as fair and democratic a system as I have ever seen in a military organization.

Another disciplinary problem was the dishonorable discharge. It was with us from the first day at Toungoo to the last grim week at Chungking. Before Pearl Harbor 12 pilots and 6 crewmen were discharged (I did not award dishonorable discharges until after December 8), some because they had merely used the A.V.G. as an excuse to get out of the services and others because of growing fears of what lay ahead. After Pearl Harbor 10 pilots and 37 ground crewmen got dishonorable discharges mostly for desertion under a variety of circumstances—some due to sheer cowardice and others after long periods of combat that took them past their individual breaking points.

Physical condition of the group deteriorated after the epic battles over Rangoon. Combat losses were small, but operational losses took a far greater toll of both planes and pilots. In one afternoon at Mingaladon seven P-40's were damaged while taxiing in heavy dust clouds. Some fell into bomb craters. Others collided in the dust. Five P-40's got lost in thick Yunnan weather while escorting the Generalissimo's transport and crash-landed all over the province. Only two planes could be repaired. Three P-40's tried to land at Heho unexpectedly. The British were unable to identify the P-40's, and refused to remove a barricade of oil barrels from the runway forcing the planes to crash-land in rice paddies. In our first group movement from Toungoo one plane crash-landed due to engine failure, and another washed out taxiing into a parked car screened by dust. Training at Kunming continued to kill inexperienced pilots and destroy planes.

By April 19 group strength was down to 251 men and 36 planes fit for combat, with another 39 in various states of repair, and 41 lost in combat or operational crack-ups. During a six-month period of intense combat we received only 20 P-40E's as replacement planes. They had six .50-caliber guns to the B's two and were fitted with droppable belly tanks, wing racks for bombs, and had a slightly faster top speed. To get them we had to remove ten of our best pilots from combat to take a three weeks' 16,000-mile trip via British Overseas Airways Corporation and Pan American Airways to Takoradi on the African Gold Coast. Along with some Pan American pilots they ferried

the planes from Takoradi to Kunming. Of the 50 P-40E's sent to Takoradi for the A.V.G. in February only 20 survived the pitfalls of mechanical trouble, pilot error, and the demands of the Ninth Air Force in Egypt and the Tenth in India to reach the A.V.G. in China. In June another 68 P-40E's were shipped to Takoradi, aboard the U.S. aircraft carrier *Ranger*. Less than one-third of these reached China before the fall of 1942. The only spare parts we received after war began were 2,000 pounds of solenoids, spark plugs, carburetors, magnetos, etc., sent out by Dr. Soong via Pan American Clipper to Calcutta. C.N.A.C. transports flew them from Calcutta to Kunming, where almost every part put a P-40 back into action. No replacement pilots reached China. To maintain our thinning ranks, American instructors in the Chinese Yunnan flying schools joined the A.V.G. as combat pilots. Every effort to get help from official American sources met with chilly rebuffs or complete indifference.

We desperately needed more planes, pilots, and spare parts to continue in combat. Sight of the numerous American Army staff officers scuttling pompously about India and China with brief cases, taking up valuable air cargo space was infuriating to us all. The group developed a strong feeling that they had been abandoned by the United States and were being left to die one by one in a foreign land by people who really were not much concerned over the outcome of the war. That feeling was to become common to American combat men everywhere until the final years of the war. I was as angry at American do-nothing policy as anybody in the group. As early as March 17, I cabled Dr. Soong in Washington:

Completely discouraged War Department failure take advantage China opportunities for air offensive against enemy. After three and half months. If airplanes promised for December delivery (including bombers) had arrived enemy would have been seriously damaged now. A.V.G. received no personnel replacements and only such other materials as you shipped out.

My pleas for only five staff officers resolutely denied but more than 50 sent out with MacGruder and Stilwell. Few of them have anything to do. Imperative that air officer with knowledge China, Burma, India, and Japanese tactics be appointed in charge of Far East aviation at once if effective co-ordination program is desired.

Induction of A.V.G. into Army no issue but if necessary should form part of major program rather than isolated incident. A.V.G. now has only one effective squadron making our total effort very little value. No workable program has been drawn up, no plan

for replacements, reinforcements air units Far East has been approved and no decision made as to immediate future operations here. Numerous army and air officers constantly visiting us each with hastily conceived plans but no authority to make effective. My recommendations unsought or disapproved by all. Convinced my usefulness and A.V.G. finished April 15 unless immediate action taken. Request permission to demobilize and discharge group this date or appoint new commander. My patriotic duty to return States and reveal to American public War Department program of indecision, obstructions, nonsupport, and passive inactivity Far East. Await your orders.

Group morale was further depressed by the ground situation in Burma. By mid-April the Japanese drive was under way again with heavy fighting against the Chinese around Toungoo and against the British astride the road to Mandalay.

The Generalissimo wanted the A.V.G. to offer air support for his Chinese armies in Burma. Without excellent air-to-ground communications, trained air-liaison officers with ground troops, and a constant flow of reliable intelligence on the ground situation, close air support for ground troops is impractical. The crude panel signals and sketchy reports from Chinese troops too often resulted in Allied planes strafing Chinese, or Japanese flak firing from position supposedly held by Allied troops. In lieu of close air support the Generalissimo settled for "morale missions," aimed at showing the Chinese troops the spiked-sun and shark-tooth insignia of the Chinese-owned planes. The Japanese had thrown a heavy air effort of dive bombers, fighters, and heavy bombers in support of their offensive, and lack of Allied air support was a prime morale problem among the Chinese troops.

Stilwell, who was then in command of all Chinese troops in Burma, still clung to the 1914 concept of the airplane solely as a means of making visual reconnaissance of the enemy. He made continual requests for visual reconnaissance of Japanese front-line positions—a feat that could not be done in high-speed P-40's from low altitudes, without making the planes clay pigeons in a shooting gallery of Japanese flak gunners and fighter pilots. Stilwell so little understood the technique of air operations that he seriously requested the A.V.G. to fly him over the front lines at low altitude in the rear seat of a slow basic trainer so that he could get a better idea of his troop dispositions. If Stilwell was ready to end his military service that easily, our pilots were not. One excuse after another was found to keep the basic training plane that Stilwell requested for his ride from becoming flyable.

The combination of morale, low-level reconnaissance, and our strafing missions against enemy airdromes set the pot of dissension boiling among the pilots at Loi-Wing. Conditions for these missions were triply hazardous. By this time the Burma jungle was pitted with great forest fires that smoldered slowly, covering all of northern Burma with a pall that necessitated instrument flying under 10,000 feet even on the clearest days. It was impossible to maintain formation in this smoke haze. On the first turn wingmen were lost and the formation broken. Japanese fighter patrols were out in strength over the front, and when P-40's were caught at low altitude, they had little chance against the Zeros. Several of our morale missions had close calls after being jumped from above. Lack of reliable intelligence from the ground forces sent other missions into Japanese flak traps where supposedly friendly forces were reported. Japanese hastily threw up strong antiaircraft defenses around their main airdromes, and strafing attacks had to brave a tremendous concentration of automatic weapons' fire. There is nothing that can take the joy out of flying faster than hours and hours of strafing just above the jungle treetops in the face of heavy ground fire.

Grumbling among the pilots reached a peak on April 20 when orders were posted for an escort mission with Blenheim bombers to Chieng-mai. Since the loss of Newkirk and McGarry, that target had a bad reputation, and the slow Blenheims could be counted on for a long stay in the target area. All pilots at Loi-Wing held a meeting to protest the Chiengmai orders. They were fed up with the strafing, morale, and low-level recon. They claimed they had signed up to fight and were still willing to defend their airdromes against enemy attack but that, unless we got tangible support in the way of replacement planes and pilots, they saw no sense in taking the offensive with these "desperate missions." Some accused me of sacrificing them in a vain attempt to win the war single-handed. Others felt I had yielded too easily to pressure from the Generalissimo and Stilwell for the fruitless low-level missions. Finally a petition was drawn up refusing to fly the Chieng-mai mission and submitting resignations of the undersigned. It was passed around among twenty-eight pilots of the Second and Third Squadrons at Loi-Wing. Everybody signed until it got to "Tex" Hill.

Tex took the floor to make a speech. He said we had started out as a group of mercenaries, and there were no bones about that, but since the United States had entered the war, the situation had changed, and it was no longer a matter of personal considerations but of national survival. "Tex" volunteered to lead the mission taking along five other

pilots who refused to submit resignations—Ed Rector, Bob Hedman, Frank Schiel, and R. J. "Catfish" Raines. The mission left Loi-Wing but turned back when weather prevented the Blenheims from making their rendezvous.

When word of the pilots' revolt reached the First Squadron, resting at Kunming from their final ordeal at Rangoon, Bob Neale radioed to Loi-Wing, "If those bastards won't fly for you, I'll bring my boys down to take over."

For three days and three nights we argued the problem at formal meetings and at informal barracks quorums. Personally I agreed with the pilots' views. The missions were unnecessarily dangerous and, with the exception of strafing enemy airdromes, offered no compensating results. Even at an altitude of 1,000 feet ground troops could hardly distinguish a fighter's insignia in the smoke haze, and visual reconnaissance of jungle-screened troops was useless. However, as long as these orders came down from my immediate superiors, the Generalissimo and Stilwell, I was obliged to execute them regardless of my personal feelings. I had already written a personal letter to Madame Chiang Kai-shek pointing out the unproductiveness of the morale and recon missions and their dangerous effects on pilot morale, with a plea that she present our case to the Generalissimo and free the group to function properly against enemy aircraft and supply lines.

Her answer reached Loi-Wing on April 23 at the height of the revolt.

"Generalissimo consents use of A.V.G. for fighting Jap planes fighting our troops and not for low-altitude recon."

Finally twenty-three pilots submitted their resignations from the group. I warned them they had the alternative of obeying my orders or taking a dishonorable discharge. I did not specify whether those orders would include any more morale or low-level recon missions. They never did, although strafing continued whenever we found a target that offered to pay large dividends on the risks involved. Submissions of their resignations combined with the resolute stand of "Tex" Hill's flight and Bob Neale's squadron took much of the steam out of the dissident faction. Nobody pressed for a decision on their resignations, and I refrained from approving them. In the excitement of hunting down Japanese reconnaissance planes, so active over Loi-Wing that week, and preparations for the Emperor's birthday turkey shoot, the revolt was all but forgotten, and nobody again questioned one of my orders. With the exception of a few pilots who had passed their personal breaking point and honestly admitted it, the group returned to the fray with all available strength as the Japanese discovered on April 28.

THE final act of the 1942 Burma tragedy was played in the tremendous natural amphitheater of the Salween River gorge. Tumbling down from its source in the eternal Himalayan snows, the Salween River carved a mile-deep chasm through the solid rock of southwestern Yunnan's mountains before settling into the broad valleys of Burma. The Burma Road, winding northeast from Lashio, spilled over the western crest of the Salween gorge and crawled down the sheer, water-worn precipice in thirty-five hairpin curves, hewn by hand out of solid rock. It took twenty miles of serpentine road to traverse the vertical mile from the crest to the suspension bridge that spanned the turbulent sepia waters of the Salween. On the east bank, the road repeated its tortuous windings up the rocky cliff to the Paoshan plateau. It was on the brink of the Salween gorge, early in May of 1942, that the Japanese strained for a knockout blow and came within an ace of fulfilling Winston Churchill's prophecy that China was the only place where Japan could win a strategic victory before the year's end.

Prelude to the Salween crisis was the renewal of the Japanese offensive in lower Burma. After the fall of Rangoon, the Japanese sent a naval task force, spearheaded by four carriers, to sweep British sea-power from the Bay of Bengal. Aided by long-range flying-boat reconnaissance from the Andaman Islands, the carrier-based planes sank freighters steaming toward Calcutta, battered a British cruiser force at sea, hammered the naval bases at Ceylon, and made Calcutta untenable as a major supply base. By mid-March the Allies had abandoned the port of Calcutta and fallen back more than a thousand miles to the ports of Bombay and Karachi in western India, throwing the full burden of Allied supply on the hodgepodge multigauge Indian railway system.

Under cover of these air attacks, the Japanese moved a convoy of

forty transports into Rangoon landing two infantry divisions and a light-armored force. This gave the enemy numerical superiority for the first time in the Burma campaign. He proceeded to make the most of it with a series of deftly timed blows designed to feint the Allies out of position and pave the way for an end run by the armored forces around a battered flank. Facing this new threat were the British under General Harold Alexander, already famous for his role at Dunkirk, astride the Irrawaddy Valley and the Chinese under Stilwell in the Sittang Valley. These forces were separated by a mountain range that complicated communications between the two fronts.

The first blow hit the Chinese entrenched around Toungoo, the former A.V.G. training base. Fighting seesawed through the burning town for three days with the Chinese eventually beginning a slow fighting withdrawal to lure the Japanese north toward Pyinmana. There Stilwell waited with the bulk of the Chinese troops in terrain that he had personally selected for the site of his counterattack. Meanwhile the Japanese jabbed at the British defending the Yenanyaung oil fields on the Irrawaddy, quickly turned a flank, and threw a road block on the road to Mandalay, trapping a Yorkshire regiment. The British sent an urgent plea for help to Stilwell. Precipitously abandoning his own offensive plans, Stilwell rushed with his only Chinese armored force and an infantry division to extricate the British. The Chinese broke the Japanese trap at Yenanyaung. But while Stilwell was hurrying his troops back to Pyinmana, the Japanese pounded the Chinese front, weakened by Stilwell's withdrawal, and the stage was set for disaster. The Japanese bent the weakened Chinese flank, pushed their armor through the hole, and began a mechanized dash north to unhinge the entire Allied front and roll it up against the dead-end valleys of northern Burma. The defense of Burma quickly disintegrated into a disgraceful rout with only a few scattered Chinese units maintaining contact with the enemy while the rest of the Allied forces—British, American, and Chinese—competed in a foot race to get out of Burma.

Stilwell's rush to bail out the trapped British regiment may have seemed militarily sound to him at the time. But the Generalissimo never forgave Stilwell for sacrificing the Chinese counteroffensive to save a few hundred British soldiers. To the Generalissimo no sacrifice was too great for a decisive blow against the Japs. He had deliberately sacrificed thousands of Chinese soldiers as bait to lure the Japanese into the bloody trap at Taierchwang that annihilated an entire Japanese army corps in 1938. He gave the order to dynamite the Yellow River dikes in the same year to halt the Japanese drive into

North China, knowing full well that thousands of Chinese soldiers and civilians would drown along with the invaders. For four years he had seen his people die like flies in the flaming, bomb-spattered wreckage of their cities.

To a man with the Generalissimo's experience and temperament, Stilwell's pulling the props from under the Chinese offensive seemed the sheerest sentimentality and incredible military callowness. From that day forward the Generalissimo had little respect for Stilwell's ability as a field commander and his faith in Stilwell's personal integrity began to crumble. If Stilwell had been a Chinese general there seems little doubt that his performance would have ended with a firing squad. As it was the Generalissimo withdrew his unqualified support of Stilwell and told Chinese field commanders they could no longer move troops on Stilwell's orders unless the Chinese War Ministry also approved. Even with good communications this policy would have produced confusion in the field. The Generalissimo never rescinded this order, except for the Ramgarh-trained Chinese troops eventually used in the north Burma offensive from India in 1944-45. It became a sore spot repeatedly rubbed raw during the bitter years that followed.

With the Japanese armor on the loose behind the Chinese front and renewed frontal pressure on both the Irrawaddy and Sittang fronts, Allied resistance melted like butter in the blazing Burma sun, and retreat turned to rout. What little co-operation previously existed among the Allies dissipated in the panic of the rout. Tanks of the British Seventh Armored Division, most of them in good condition, were destroyed because there was no road to India. Driven up the Burma Road, these tanks would have been worth their weight in gold to the Chinese war effort. British and Chinese wrangled over transport. Stilwell's small group of American staff officers detached themselves from the Chinese armies and rallied around Shwebo, about fifty miles north of Mandalay. Native Burmese harried the retreating Allied columns like timber wolves, sniping from the jungle, cutting down stragglers, looting and burning foreign-owned property, and indulging in a triumphant orgy of murder and arson that gave vent to the pent-up hatred engendered by eighty years of British rule.

By April 29 the Japanese armor had rolled into Lashio, opposed only by light Chinese resistance. This force had covered nearly three hundred miles in eighteen days, outracing the monsoon and blasting the smug assumption of Allied ground commanders that the arrival of the monsoon rains in early May would be sufficient to bog down the



Japanese drive in sticky red mud. That same day Stilwell ordered Colonel Caleb Haynes to fly a DC-3 transport from Chungking to Shwebo to evacuate Stilwell and his staff to China.

Stilwell radioed me at Loi-Wing on April 30, "Has my plane arrived yet from Chungking en route Shwebo. Can Loi-Wing field be used for few more days. I want return there soon. Can you make available for my temporary use two passenger cars for use on road Loi-Wing, Lashio."

I replied that we would hold a truck and staff car for his use at Mongshih on the Burma Road, where most of the Third A.V.G. Squadron was available to protect Stilwell's DC-3.

On May 1 I radioed Stilwell, "Chinese have evacuated Loi-Wing. A.V.G. leaving today. Suggest you use Mongshih en route to Lashio. A.V.G. moving Kunming this date."

The same day Stilwell replied, "Am staying this front."

That was the last official word from Stilwell for three weeks. Haynes flew the DC-3 to Shwebo on May 1. Stilwell refused to board the plane and ordered Haynes to fly a group of his staff officers to India to set up a temporary headquarters. The next day Stilwell began his famous walk out of Burma, emerging twenty days later at Imphal in India to captivate the world with his classic understatement, "We took a helluva beating."

In the universal appraisal of Stilwell's long trudge through the jungle as an amazing feat of physical endurance for a man nearing sixty, its significance as the performance of the senior American officer in Asia and the chief of staff for Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek has been generally overlooked. The Generalissimo hardly expected his chief of staff to leave his Chinese armies to shift for themselves and deliberately to remain incommunicado for three weeks while the fate of China teetered precariously on the rim of the Salween gorge. I have never been able to understand either why Stilwell refused to fly with Haynes. By DC-3 he was only a few hours from India and less than six hours from Chungking. At either point he would have been in a position to direct the reorganization of Chinese resistance wherever the need was most acute. In the jungle he was of no use to anybody except his immediate party. If Stilwell had been a company, battalion, or regimental commander whose primary responsibility was for the troops in his immediate command, his walkout would certainly have been commendable. But for a man with the tremendous burden of the ranking American officer in Asia and chief of staff of the Chinese Republic, it was a startling exhibition of his ignorance or disregard for

these larger responsibilities. In either case it gave the Generalissimo further cause for questioning Stilwell's judgment. All my experience with Stilwell led me to believe that he always thought of himself primarily as a simple field soldier and had little understanding of or patience with his primary duty as a military diplomat. In my opinion, his was the type of military thinking that could win battles while losing a war.

While Stilwell was trudging through the Burma jungle, China faced its darkest hour since the fall of Nanking. By the time the Japanese reached Lashio, they were seriously overextended by conventional military standards. But they did not win their initial Asiatic victories according to conventional military standards. Advance of the Japanese column had been so rapid that there was no time to organize supply lines to the rear. Troops lived off the country, used captured British and Chinese trucks for transport, and supplemented their arms and ammunition from the Chinese depots around Lashio. The Japanese column hardly paused to consolidate its gains at Lashio before dashing up the Burma Road into China. These Japs were in no condition to fight a sustained battle against determined opposition, but they were ideally equipped to scatter light resistance and advance almost as fast as their mechanized equipment could carry them.

After the fall of Lashio the Chinese army in northeast Burma became utterly disorganized. Many officers and men fled into the mountains. Small bands trying to outrun the Japanese armor fought their way through hostile Burmese. Chinese soldiers seized civilian trucks and cars from the motor pools at Lashio and raced full throttle for the Salween. The twisting narrow road was often blocked by wrecks and masses of refugees. Two Chinese regiments made a stand at Kutkai just below the Yunnan border and stalled the Japanese in a narrow pass for three days until they were outflanked. There was another brief skirmish at the border town of Wanting, in the shadow of the wilted flower arches that had welcomed the Chinese to Burma less than two months earlier. After Wanting all Chinese resistance evaporated in a miasma of defeat.

Skeletons of the twenty-two damaged P-40's we were forced to burn in our hurried retreat from Loi-Wing were still smoking when Japanese patrols reached the field on May 2. The next day Bob Neale, flying a recon mission along the Burma Road, spotted a scouting column of enemy armored cars at Wanting. There were no obstacles between the Japanese and Kunming but a broken bridge and the A.V.G.

After the retreat from Loi-Wing, the bulk of the A.V.G. was based at Kunming with an advance element of five P-40's under Bob Neale at Paoshan to protect the A.V.G. truck convoys still moving out of Burma. A radio and servicing detachment was stationed at Yunnanyi, a field about halfway between Paoshan and Kunming where Air Corps transports had flown in considerable aviation gasoline from India during early April. We used Yunnanyi as a refueling point on missions to northern Burma.

The Yunnan warning net was crumbling fast in the face of the Japanese advance. Our mobile units in northern Burma were engulfed in the ebb tide flowing into China. Regular Yunnan net station operators had not been paid by the Chinese government for more than a month. Japanese patrols were capturing some net stations. Enemy agents bribed others to stay silent. Without warning, fifty Jap bombers hit Paoshan on May 4, turning the walled town into a bloody, flaming shambles. Paoshan was swollen with thousands of refugees streaming out of Burma, and hundreds were killed by bombs and fire, among them A.V.G. pilot Ben Foshee, who was cut down by bomb fragments as he ran for his P-40. Charley Bond was the only A.V.G. pilot to get off the ground. He shot down two bombers as they left the city. Coming in for a landing, Charley was surprised by three Japanese fighters. With his P-40 in flames over the field, Charley bailed out at 1,000 feet and was severely burned before he hit the ground.

The next day we caught the Japanese over Paoshan with one of the longest planned interceptions of the war—245 miles from Kunming to Paoshan. I sent nine P-40's to Yunnanyi at dawn to refuel and await further orders. At 9:45 A.M. the Chinese code room at Kunming intercepted a Japanese radio message indicating one group of bombers had taken off from Mingaladon and another group was preparing for departure from Chiengmai. With a cruising speed of 170 miles per hour it was fairly obvious that both Japanese formations couldn't reach Kunming. Both groups could reach Paoshan at about the same time and pick up a fighter escort at Heho and Namsang airdromes on the way, without altering their course to Paoshan. I ordered the fighters at Yunnanyi to patrol over Paoshan and gave them an estimated time of arrival of 12:30 for the Japanese. Patrolling at 23,000 feet the P-40's missed the first wave of Japs, who were circling Paoshan at 18,000 feet before attacking.

I was glued to my radio in Kunming, watching the second hand sweep around my watch.

At 12:45 I heard Ralph Sasser the A.V.G. ground radioman at Paoshan shout, "They're strafing the field—bombers too."

The P-40's picked up the scent like a beagle hound after a rabbit. Sasser came on the air again.

"Wow! they're dropping like flies."

"Who?" I asked him.

"Don't know. — just went outside again. Must be Japs—they're burning. Three burning in the air right now."

P-40's shot down eight of the attacking fighters and then climbed in time to sail into a second wave of bombers escorted by a few fighters. The bombers turned tail and ran without dropping their bombs when they sighted the P-40's climbing to meet them.

The same day the Japanese advance column was approaching the west rim of the Salween gorge. There were still thousands of Chinese civilian refugees and soldiers straggling up the road west of the Salween. Our pilots reported the Japanese motorized columns moving up the center of the road between swarms of unarmed Chinese soldiers and civilians on both sides. This was one of the few times during the war that I became greatly alarmed. If the Japanese got to Kunming, it meant the end of the war for China. With the Japanese in Yunnan the only possible supply route to China would be across the deserts of Turkestan and Mongolia from Russia. Cut off from Allied aid, China's resistance would collapse like a punctured lung. Japan would have a vast Asiatic base to exploit for further operations into India and Siberia. This would come at a time when Russia was reeling under German thrusts to the Volga, the British were building a huge base at Karachi to receive the remnants of Montgomery's defeated Eighth Army should Rommel take the Nile Delta, the Japanese invasion of India seemed imminent, and the United States had all but lost the Philippines.

I was faced with one of those grim decisions that come to every military man so often in battle—issuing orders that meant the sacrifice of a few to save the many. We had small stomach for bombing and machine-gunning those refugees on the west bank of the Salween, but if we were going to stop the Japs, we would have to slaughter some innocents along the road. I radioed Madame Chiang in Chungking on May 6:

Latest reports say Japs on west bank Salween River 1500 hours 5 May stop Bridge destroyed stop Japs meeting no opposition anywhere as soldiers civilians panic stricken fleeing east along road

stop Consider situation desperate and Japs may drive Kunming in trucks unless road and bridges destroyed and determined opposition developed stop Due to fact many Chinese trucks west of Salween presumably in hands of enemy request authority His Excellency the Generalissimo to attack targets between Salween and Lungling city.

Madame Chiang answered:

Generalissimo instructs you send all available AVG to attack trucks boats etc between Salween and Lungling city stop Tell AVG I appreciate their loyalty and redoubled efforts particularly at this critical juncture stop Please continue attacks especially boats and transports on Salween River stop Shall keep you informed immediately any change in situation.

By noon of May 6 advance elements of the Japanese armored column, including artillery and truckloads of infantry, were on the west bank of the Salween. The shattered suspension bridge halted them at the water's edge with their trucks, armored cars, and cannon spread along the twenty miles of winding road on the western escarpment. There they waited for a regiment of engineers to arrive and throw a pontoon bridge across the Salween.

It was the new P-40E's recently ferried from Africa that gave us the equipment to attack the enemy effectively. Major General Lewis Hyde Brereton, fresh from the Philippines and Dutch East Indies, was then in India organizing the Tenth U.S. Air Force. In his natural zeal to build a new air force he held the P-40E's en route to the A.V.G. for his command. Only the most strenuous protests of the Generalissimo to President Roosevelt forced Brereton to relinquish the P-40E's to the Chinese, who had bought them for cash in the United States.

The P-40E was equipped with wing bomb racks. Two of our armorers, Roy Hoffman and Charley Baisden, had improvised a belly rack that could carry 570-pound Russian high-explosive bombs, which were plentiful in China. For months prior to the arrival of the P-40E's we had experimented with homemade bomb racks on the P-40B's without success. We tried everything, including dropping whisky bottles filled with gasoline as incendiaries and pushing lead-pipe bombs through the flare chutes, and I personally spent many hours in our Kunming machine shop trying to fashion an external bomb rack that would work on a P-40B. Until the arrival of the Model E's the

A.V.G.'s most serious weakness was our inability to deliver bombs to the enemy.

Apparently the only people who realized our acute need for bombers were my fellow citizens of Louisiana who raised \$15,109.36 by popular subscription in a "Buy a Bomber for Chennault" campaign. When the War Department informed them that even the smallest bomber cost many times \$15,000 and that all bomber production for several years was already allocated, former Governor James A. Noe of Monroe, Louisiana, sent the money to Madame Chiang to aid Chinese war orphans.

Some of the A.V.G. pilots were former Navy dive bombers from the carrier *Ranger* and were eager to demonstrate their speciality against the Japanese. "Tex" Hill, Ed Rector, Tom Jones, Frank Lawlor, Lewis Bishop, Link Laughlin, Frank Schiel, and Bob Little volunteered for the bombing missions. Just after dawn on May 7, a handful of A.V.G. pilots took off to stop the victorious Japanese Army on the brink of the Salween—a task at which the combined British and Chinese Armies in Burma had failed dismally.

"Tex" Hill led a flight of four P-40E's, loaded with fragmentation bombs in wing racks, a big Russian demolition bomb under their bellies, and escorted by a top-cover flight of four P-40B's. With Hill in the bombing flight were Tom Jones, Ed Rector, and Frank Lawlor, all Navy pilots. Top-cover flight was led by Arvid Olson with R. T. Smith and Erik Shilling, all former Air Corps pilots, and Tom Haywood, an ex-Marine. The mission was a demonstration of genuine unification of the armed forces.

As the eight P-40's approached the Paoshan plateau, great blue-bellied thunderheads were building up to the south—heralds of the approaching monsoon season, which had already engulfed southern Burma. Over Paoshan, "Tex" Hill circled for a few minutes studying the weather ahead and then resolutely plunged to the south, threading the flights between the towering, ice-crested cumulus clouds. A quarter of an hour later the flight emerged from bouncing turbulence into clear cloudless sky, with the muddy Salween ahead and the purple-tinged ridges of the Kao Li Kung Mountains beyond the western escarpment. Visibility was sharp and clear because the rains from the passing storms had laid the dust haze usually so troublesome on even the brightest days.

The Japanese engineering regiment had arrived and was shifting pontoons from trucks to the water's edge. The rest of the column lay

along the serpentine road that coiled like a dusty python across the dark rock wall. During their advance through Burma, the jungle had effectively screened the Japanese against A.V.G. strafing attacks. On the Salween escarpment they were trapped in the open like flies on flypaper—a sheer precipice on one side of the narrow road and a rock wall on the other. “Tex” Hill led his bombers in a dive-bombing attack with the Russian demolition bombs, aiming at the top of the gorge to block the road with landslides cutting off the Japs’ line of retreat.

With the road partially blocked by dive-bombing, Hill led his flight in a frag bombing attack on the trucks. Then they returned to shuttle back and forth, strafing along the straight stretches of road, lacing the Japanese with bullets from twenty-four .50-caliber machine guns. When the bombers exhausted their ammunition, the top-cover flight came down to empty their guns into the helpless Japs’ burning pontoons and bridging equipment. For four more days I threw everything we had against the Salween gorge and the Burma Road as far back as the Burma border. General Chow lent us a flight of Curtiss Hawk-3 dive bombers and a dozen Russian SB-3 twin-engine bombers, all flown by Chinese pilots. The SB-3’s flew one mission from Kunming. They returned in such poor condition they couldn’t get off the ground again and are still rusting in revetments dispersed among the rice paddies. The Japs sent another group of light tanks up from Burma to escort more motorized infantry. A flight led by Frank Schiel caught them just below Lungling and scattered them with bombs and machine-gun fire. Every town and village along the road that could serve the Japanese as shelter or a supply depot was bombed and burned. Another flight caught a truck column loaded with gas and left behind at least fifty billowing gasoline fires. By May 11 the only military traffic along the Burma Road was moving south toward Burma. I was able to wire Madame Chiang on May 12:

AVG flight bombed and machine-gunned 75 to 100 Jap trucks headed south yesterday stop Rear of column just entering Wanting city while head was south of city stop More than 20 trucks burned many more damaged stop Return fire received from light tanks in column stop Reconnaissance along road back to Salween discovered only single trucks at long intervals stop Believe no Jap unit large as battalion now north of Wanting stop Reconnaissance this morning along west bank Salween discovered no sign of Japs.

By May 18 when Stilwell emerged from the jungle at Imphal, the crisis in the Salween situation had passed and resolved into a stale-

mate, with the Japanese entrenched on the heights of the west bank and the Chinese dug in on the east bank. The A.V.G. continued harassing attacks until the monsoon made flying impossible after mid-May. Charred pontoons on the west bank of the Salween marked the high tide of the Japanese advance into Yunnan. Japanese remained a potential threat as long as they remained on the west bank but constant air attack on their supply lines and depots made it impossible for them ever to assemble sufficient men and material for a renewed offensive. The stalemate continued for two years until the summer of 1944 when the Chinese Yoke forces, under the command of General Wei Li-huang, assisted by the Fourteenth U.S. Air Force, crossed the Salween to begin the slow and costly offensive that eventually drove the Japanese back into Burma.

The A.V.G. had staved off China's collapse on the Salween but the outlook was still grim. China was cut off from all land communication with the Allied world except the ancient Silk Road across the Turkestan desert to Russia, which was then useless because of Russia's struggle for survival before Stalingrad. The only other hope for communications lay through the air, over the snow-capped, weather-soaked mountains that lay between India's Assam Valley and the Kunming plateau. Until the end of the war, supply remained China's most critical problem.

The Burma debacle had a profound influence on the pattern of the war in Asia. Japanese isolation of China shattered the Allied dream of supplying Chinese armies with modern equipment and throwing the tremendous weight of China's manpower against the most vulnerable flank of the Japanese. It closed the gates of China to everything but airpower and accelerated the forces of internal economic and political decay that had begun to ferment during the military stalemate from 1938 to 1941.

China's other heritage from the Burma debacle was Stilwell's obsession for wiping out the stain of his defeat in Burma. This was destined to dominate Sino-American military planning for three years and once again lead China to the brink of the ruin it so narrowly escaped on the rim of the Salween gorge. Stilwell did not report to the Generalissimo in Chungking until June 4. Then he presented an extraordinary proposal that all Chinese armies be reorganized with American officers holding all posts of colonel and above. This plan was firmly rejected by the Generalissimo, but throughout the remainder of Stilwell's duty in the China-Burma-India Theater of

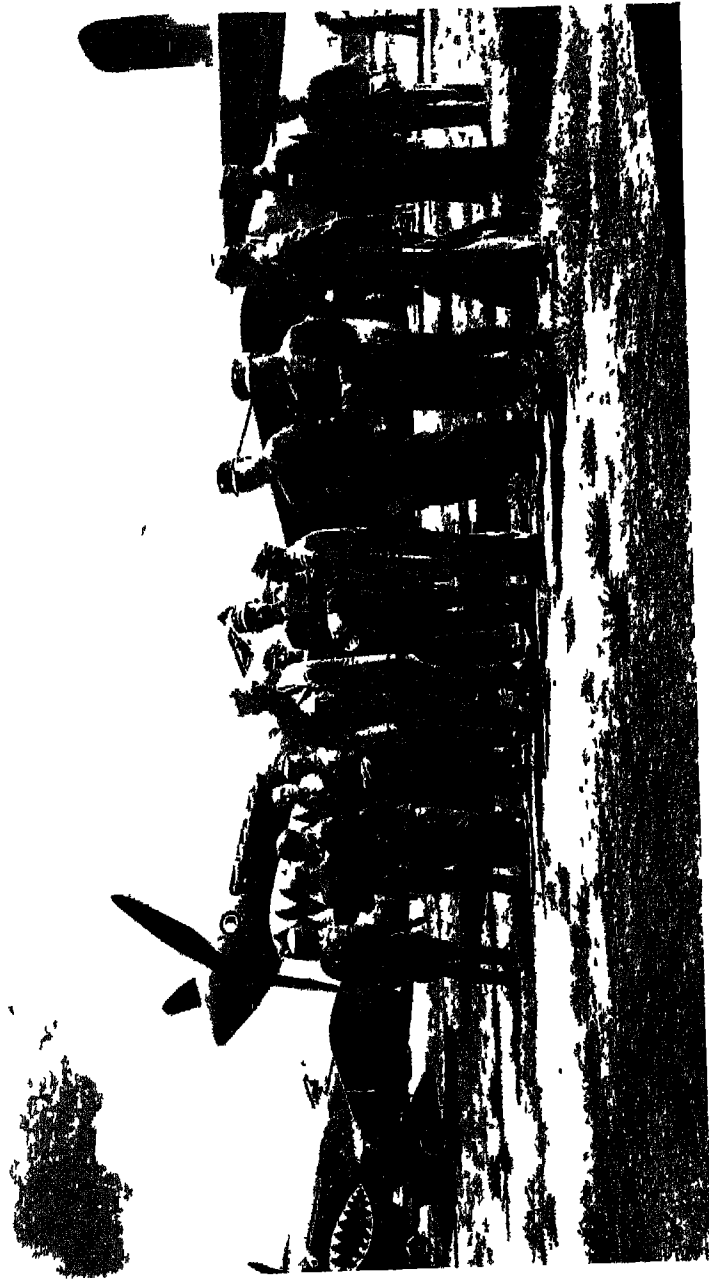


Operations, it remained his real objective. It was the rock on which Stilwell and the Generalissimo had their final split.

By the end of May 1942 induction of the A.V.G. into the U.S. Army Air Forces had become a festering problem that threatened to deprive China of her only effective air defense. Induction of the A.V.G. into the U.S. Army had been authorized as early as December 30, 1941, but none of the numerous American staff officers flitting around Asia for the MacGruder and Stilwell missions did anything about it until March 29 when I was called to Chungking for a conference with the Generalissimo, Madame Chiang, Stilwell, and Clayton Bissell, who had come to China to handle that end of the Doolittle Tokyo raid and remained as Stilwell's air officer.

Bissell's conduct of arrangements to receive the Tokyo raiders in China did nothing to alter my opinion of him acquired when I studied fighter tactics under him at the Air Corps tactical school in 1931. Bissell was so secretive about his mission that he neglected to inform me of what he was up to. As a result, when the Doolittle raiders were forced to change their plans and arrived over China in darkness and bad weather the vast warning net of East China had no way of communicating with the American bombers and guiding them over the unfamiliar terrain. If I had been notified, a single A.V.G. command ground radio station plugged into the East China net could have talked most of the raiders into a friendly field. As it was, they all crashed or bailed out in the dark. Doolittle himself bailed out near the Japanese lines and narrowly escaped capture. One crew flew past several friendly bases to crash in Japanese-held Poyang Lake where they were taken prisoner. Three of these crewmen were eventually executed at Shanghai. My bitterness over that bit of bungling has not eased with the passing years.

The Doolittle raid is another good example of the singularly one-sided view of the Chinese war effort that affected many Americans in China. As a result of the Doolittle raid, the Japanese sent an expeditionary force of a hundred thousand men, supported by a sizable air force, to seize the airfields that were to have been used by the Doolittle mission and Force Aquila, a group of B-17's and B-24's that were scheduled to bomb Japan from East China fields shortly after the Doolittle raid. Some of these bombers were detained in Egypt where they became the nucleus of the Ninth Air Force. The remainder were held in India by General Brereton, who used them in desultory raids on the Andaman Islands. During this campaign the Japanese



Chinese generals inspect the line of the Flying Tigers.



Generals Stilwell and Chennault confer at Kunming.



Glenn and Chennault greet Lieut. Gen. Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart on his

also tried to discourage the Chinese from further aid to American airmen.

Word of A.V.G. exploits spread speedily through China via Oriental grapevine telegraph. Long before an American plane appeared over East China, prestige of American airmen in that area was enormous. Wherever there was a Chinese landing strip, villagers voluntarily filled in craters after each Japanese bombing so the runway would be ready for the A.V.G. when it appeared. When the Fourteenth Air Force was searching for new advanced fields in the summer of 1944, we found strips in the coastal provinces that local Chinese had been maintaining for more than three years against the coming of the A.V.G.

In a three-month campaign, the Japanese drove their bloody spear two hundred miles through the heart of East China, devastating twenty thousand square miles, ploughing up landing fields, and exterminating everybody remotely suspected of aiding the Doolittle raiders. Entire villages through which the raiders had passed were slaughtered to the last child and burned to the ground. One sizable city was razed for no other reason than the sentiment displayed by its citizens in filling up Jap bomb craters on the nearby airfield. Main airfields at Chuhsien, Yushan, and Lishui were so thoroughly destroyed that it was easier to build new fields than to restore the damage. More than six hundred Japanese air raids preceded the advancing army. A quarter-million Chinese soldiers and civilians were killed in the three-month campaign. The Chinese paid a terrible price for the Doolittle raid, but they never complained. Neither did they ever stint their efforts to aid American airmen in Japanese-occupied territory during the remaining years of the war. There are hundreds of American pilots and crewmen alive today who owe their lives to the aid of Chinese, farmers, guerrillas, and soldiers who guided them back to safety knowing full well that the price of detection was death for themselves, their families, and their community. However, it did gall Chinese who were familiar with these facts when they listened to loudmouthed American noncombatant officers in Kunming and Chungking who fostered a fashion of blaming their fancied personal discomfort on Chinese unwillingness to make sacrifices and fight the war against Japan.

During the summer of 1942, when the Chinese were driving the Japanese back to the coast, I received numerous requests for air support for these Chinese troops. I sent what few A.V.G. P-40's we had left to aid them. But the Washington planners who ordered the Doo-

little raid paid no heed to urgent Chinese requests for more American planes to aid their counteroffensive. Nor did any of the numerous American staff officers then stationed in Chungking make any effort to visit the front and provide Washington with authentic reports on this tremendous campaign until the fall of 1942, long after the fighting was over.

With the Generalissimo's support, I vigorously opposed induction of the A.V.G. The A.V.G. had a combat record that was never equaled by a Regular Army or Navy fighter group of similar size. I felt it was criminal to sacrifice the spirit and experience of the group for a mere change in uniform. The A.V.G. was a unique organization, specially trained for a task it had performed with unbelievable success. Its combat record had proved the soundness of my theories to the satisfaction of everybody except some of my Air Corps colleagues.

The Army's excuse for induction was that the paper work involved in supplying a nonregulation organization was too difficult. It was made quite clear by Bissell and Stilwell during the March 29 conference in Chungking that the A.V.G. would be shut off from further supplies if it refused induction. Unless the A.V.G. fought in Army uniforms, they were to be denied the privilege of fighting at all. I was personally unwilling to withdraw from the war under any circumstances and agreed to accept a return to active duty. I made it clear to Stilwell that my men would have to speak for themselves.

One of the first issues to arise was command of the proposed new air-force units in China. I believe I was not immodest in assuming that my long experience in China coupled with the A.V.G. combat record entitled me to primary consideration for the post. Gen. "Hap" Arnold, then commanding the Army Air Forces, soon set me straight on that score. On Feb. 13, 1942, I received the following radio from Lauchlin Currie in Washington via Dr. Soong:

Arnold is of opinion you are A-1 combat man and has fullest praise for AVG but wants member his own staff to head larger show stop [Millard F.] Harmon not available while [Lawrence] Hickey not a staff man leaving only Bissell stop Harmon says Bissell now changed to your views on tactics stop Bissell can pull more stuff from Army this being essential for larger effort stop We feel proposed setup deserves fair trial because China's interests demand good tactics as well as good material support stop We hope you will co-operate and participate stop Your promotion to brigadier general will shortly be made.

I had suggested Major General "Miff" Harmon and Colonel Larry Hickey as possible alternatives because there was a slight suspicion that Arnold would never allow a military maverick like me to get an important command. Both Hickey and Harmon believed fighters had a place in air war, and I could not forget Bissell's pathetic tactical school theory that the only successful fighter attack against bombers should be made by dropping a ball-and-chain device to foul propellers.

My own orders to active duty arrived on April 9, promoting me from captain to temporary colonel. Nine days later I was promoted to temporary brigadier general. Although I had been senior to Bissell in the Regular Army, his promotion to brigadier general was dated one day earlier than mine so that he then became senior to me. It was an old and effective Army routine.

The Generalissimo was reluctant to part with the A.V.G. because of his previous experience with the Allies, which had resulted in the Chinese providing troops, guns, and blood in exchange for empty promises and Allied staff officers. He agreed to order demobilization of the A.V.G. only after Stilwell solemnly promised to replace it with a complete American fighter group in China. Stilwell also promised the Generalissimo I would remain as the senior American air commander in China for the duration of the war. Neither promise was kept. On the date the Generalissimo demobilized the A.V.G. the 23rd Fighter Group, scheduled to replace it, consisted of a dozen Air Forces pilots, fifteen ground-crew men, and no planes.

During the Chungking negotiations Stilwell and Bissell seemed to be concerned primarily with dissolving the A.V.G. and not unduly interested in how they would obtain replacements or fight the war in China without it. In this, as in other conferences on the same subject, combat efficiency quickly became a secondary consideration where Army prestige was at stake. They were almost pathetically insistent upon discharging the A.V.G. on April 30, but knowing War Department "inertia" so well, I proposed July 4 as "Dissolve Day"—fully confident that a replacement group could be and would be provided by that date. Madame Chiang supported me on this point, and so it was agreed—with smiles and handshaking from all but me.

The A.V.G. was not enthusiastic about rejoining the services. All of them were reservists, and most of them joined the A.V.G. as an escape from rigid discipline and discrimination by regulars against the reserve. By April, when the induction terms were published at Loi-Wing and Kunming, they were war weary and bitter about the failure of the United States to provide spare parts and replacement planes

while Air Forces DC-3's shuttled about China carrying high-ranking staff officers, complete with swagger sticks and brief cases. They viewed every "brass"-loaded transport as so many potential spark plugs, oxygen bottles, tires, and carburetors. When they saw comrades crash and die for lack of these things, their bitterness was understandable.

Most of the men were willing to serve out their contracts and accept induction terms if they were given a thirty-day furlough before returning to combat. By the time their contracts expired in July, all of them would have served a year on foreign service and seven months of combat under the worst conditions. Bissell asked me to make a personal appeal to the group to forgo a furlough. I refused and told him bluntly that the A.V.G. deserved and needed a rest. Desperate because he knew the Army could not provide replacements to meet the July fourth deadline, Bissell asked for permission to make a speech to the group at Kunming. The group assembled in the auditorium of Yunnan University shortly after the Salween battle. I warned Bissell that he might get a rough reception, but he was confident. He outlined all the reasons why he thought the group should stay on in China and then delivered his clincher, "And for any of you who don't join the Army, I can guarantee to have your draft boards waiting for you when you step down a gangplank onto United States soil."

The boys were polite. They sat in stony silence. Later they came to me individually or in small groups. Their stories were all the same. "If that's any sample of how the Army is going to treat us, we want no part of it." When A.V.G. pilot George Paxton later announced, with unrepeatable expletives, to an astonished audience of Air Forces brass in a Washington war room that he thought, "General Bissell behaved like a —," he was echoing majority sentiment.

When the joint Army-Navy induction board toured the A.V.G. squadrons, they found only 5 pilots and 22 ground men out of the 250 in the group willing to stay on in China indefinitely.

The situation was so bad that Colonel Haynes, a member of the induction board, radioed Stilwell on June 23, "From present observations I deem it imperative that A.V.G. induction be deferred until October first and present contracts be continued otherwise our operations are in serious jeopardy. Induction board strongly concurs above recommendation."

Haynes' warning was ignored. Induction of the A.V.G. had already been publicized as part of a world-wide Air Forces public relations

splurge on July 4. The Chinese were not unique in their efforts to save face.

We slipped in a blow at Hanoi just before the monsoon season closed in on Western China, catching a large group of fighters on the ground at Gia Lam Airdrome on May 12, burning fifteen and damaging twenty more with the loss of A.V.G. pilot John Donovan, who was killed by flak. Donovan was one of the younger pilots who required additional training. He had volunteered for this mission, and I let him go because I was confident that he was fully trained. The Generalissimo's main concern for the summer was the air defense of Chungking, where the bombing season was about to begin. I gambled on bluffing the Japanese away from Chungking and catching them by surprise in East China, where they were showing signs of renewing their annual terror-bombing campaign against undefended cities.

A.V.G. headquarters and two squadrons moved to Peishiyi, an airfield twenty miles from Chungking, on June 5. For three days we kept the squadron buzzing ostentatiously over Chungking at low altitude. By that time I estimated the Japanese would have word that the A.V.G. was ready to defend Chungking. Leaving only four P-40's, with instructions to keep the sound of engine noise over Chungking daily, and a field full of well-painted bamboo P-40 dummies at Peishiyi, I ordered the rest of the two squadrons (one squadron was retained to defend Kunming) into the Hengyang-Lingling-Kweilin line of East China from which we could strike at the major enemy air bases around Hankow and Canton. In the first flight over Kweilin 11 P-40's knocked down 12 out of 18 Jap raiders. Air fighting broke out all along the East China front. We dive-bombed enemy airfields and shipping at Hankow and Canton, supported the Chinese counteroffensive in Kiangsi, and fought off counterattacks over our fields, running up our total score to 299 Japanese planes destroyed before July 4. With the appearance of the A.V.G. in East China, Jap terror bombing of cities stopped. Henceforth Jap targets were airfields not cities.

The group celebrated its final day in the air by knocking down five enemy fighters over Hengyang and escorting A.A.F. B-25's to bomb Tien Ho Airdrome at Canton on July 4. I passed the day at Peishiyi doing paper work. That night we drove to the home of China's aged president, Lin Sen, who played host to the A.V.G. Rain canceled a scheduled barbecue, moving the party indoors. Madame Kung and Madame Sun Yat-sen presented me with an oil painting of the Generalissimo, Madame Chiang, and myself. We played musical chairs, drank nonalcoholic punch, and at 11 P.M. we drove through the drizzle



back to our hostels at Peishiyi. At midnight the American Volunteer Group passed into history.

The group that the military experts predicted would not last three weeks in combat had fought for seven months over Burma, China, Thailand, and French Indo-China, destroying 299 Japanese planes with another 153 probably destroyed. All of this with a loss of 12 P-40's in combat and 61 on the ground, including the 22 burned at Loi-Wing. Four pilots were killed in the air combat; six were killed by antiaircraft fire; three by enemy bombs on the ground; and three were taken prisoner. Ten more died as the result of flying accidents. Although the Japanese promised on their radio broadcasts to shoot A.V.G. prisoners as bandits, they treated our three prisoners as well as regular British and American POW's. I took it as an indication of the enemy's genuine respect for our organization.

Most of the group had been decorated by the Chinese government; ten pilots had been awarded the British and American Distinguished Flying Crosses. My personal awards included the Chinese Cloud Banner and Long Sword of a Commander, the Order of the British Empire, and the U.S. Distinguished Service Medal. The flashing shark's teeth of our P-40's and our trademark as Flying Tigers were world famous.

The group had whipped the Japanese Air Force in more than fifty air battles without a single defeat. With the R.A.F. it kept the port of Rangoon and the Burma Road open for two and a half precious months while supplies trickled into China. With less than one third of its combat strength it saved China from final collapse on the Salween. Its reputation alone was sufficient to keep Japanese bombers away from Chungking. It freed the cities of East China from years of terror bombing and finally gave both Chinese and American morale an incalculable boost at a time when it was sagging dangerously low. All this cost the Chinese \$8,000,000—about \$3,000,000 in salaries and personnel expenses and \$5,000,000 for planes and equipment. After the final accounting was made, I wrote Dr. Soong my regrets that expenses had exceeded my original estimates.

He replied, "The A.V.G. was the soundest investment China ever made. I am ashamed that you should even consider the cost."

The A.V.G. gave me the greatest opportunity an air officer ever had—to collect and train a group like that with complete freedom of action. It afforded me enormous satisfaction. Not only was I able to prove my methods sound, but in so doing I made a significant contribution to the common cause against the enemy I hated so bitterly. My twin regrets were that circumstances had prevented me from ever

throwing the entire group at the Japanese in a single battle and that the Army had forced the group to disband.

There were two footnotes to the A.V.G. story. First the case of fifty-five A.V.G. pilots and ground-crew men who were unwilling to see the air defense of China collapse completely when the Army was unable to provide either planes or personnel by July 4 and volunteered to remain in combat for two extra weeks. Although their agreement called only for defense of Chinese cities against Japanese air attacks, they all voluntarily participated in numerous offensive dive-bombing, strafing, and bomber-escort missions deep into enemy territory. Two of them were killed on these volunteer offensive missions—John Petach, of Perth Amboy, New Jersey, who had married our redheaded nurse, Emma J. Foster, and Arnold Shamblyn, of Commerce, Oklahoma.

The second came in two notes, one from General Arnold, the other from A.V.G. pilot Frank Schiel, who stayed on in China as a major in the Army.

Arnold wrote me at Peishiyi from Washington on August 14, 1942.

As a concrete example of the world-wide effect of your superior performance of most difficult duty I want you to know that I am personally directing an intense effort to enroll in the Army Air Forces all of your ex-American Volunteer Group combat personnel who are now in the States. We are after these lads in order that their skill, experience and ability which you have instilled into them shall not be lost to the Army Air Forces.

Frank Schiel's note was written in Kunming two weeks earlier.

Erik Shilling was here yesterday for a short time and brought news that really hurt. Two or three days ago all Air Transport Command control officers in India and Africa received a radio from Washington stating that absolutely no priority would be given to former A.V.G. members. This leaves the last bunch [those who volunteered for extra combat duty] including Red [Mrs. John] Petach [then pregnant] stranded in India. They are trying hard to get boat passage. Really I cannot understand this. We didn't come over here for patriotic reasons but it worked out that we did our country a great service. Is there going to be no recognition, no compensation for all this?

Frank Schiel lies buried on a hill overlooking Kunming. While flying a P-38, trying to deliver negatives from a photographic mission over Formosa to my headquarters, he crashed into a storm-wrapped mountain. The date was December 8, 1942, our anniversary of Pearl Harbor, marking a solid year of combat on Schiel's record.

# 12.

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THE China Air Task Force was patched together in the midst of combat from whatever happened to be available in China during the gloomy summer of 1942. That was precious little. As the stepchild of the Tenth Army Air Force in distant Delhi the C.A.T.F. had to fight, scream, and scrape for every man, plane, spark plug, and gallon of gas.

Stilwell solemnly promised the Generalissimo to replace the A.V.G. with a full-strength Air Forces fighter group of four squadrons and a hundred planes. On the delivery date set by them—July 4, 1942—the Generalissimo found himself exchanging the veteran A.V.G. for three newly activated squadrons of the 23rd Fighter Group that existed largely on paper. Actually the Army supplied only a dozen green pilots and twenty clerks and mechanics. Everything else in the 23rd Group was A.V.G. equipment bought and paid for by the Chinese. The Army provided no fighter planes, no trucks or jeeps, no radios, no administrative or maintenance equipment, not even an extra pair of uniform pants or an experienced group commander. Bob Neale, senior A.V.G. squadron leader, commanded the 23rd Group and led it in combat until July 19 when he was succeeded by Colonel Robert L. Scott, Jr. Army ground equipment for the 23rd Group did not reach India until one year later in the summer of 1943. It arrived in China the next fall.

Fourth squadron for the group was acquired by subterfuge. The 16th Fighter Squadron of the Tenth Air Force, 51st Fighter Group, was bogged down in the monsoon weather of India's Assam Valley where fighter operations were impossible during the summer. By inviting a single flight at a time to China for "experience" I lured the entire squadron to Peishiyi during June and July and never returned them. The 16th was well equipped with Kitty Hawks (P-40E) and veteran pilots. After the departure of the A.V.G.'s these experienced pilots of the 16th—Johnny Alison, Ed Goss, Johnny Lombard, Harry Pike, Harry Young, and George Hazlett—furnished most of the C.A.T.F.

combat leaders. The 16th stayed on in China until the end of the war and fought through all the hottest actions along with the 74th, 75th, and 76th Squadrons of the 23rd Group.

When the C.A.T.F. officially took over from the A.V.G., President Roosevelt's personal appeal to the A.V.G. was still flapping from our headquarters bulletin board. Dated April 23, 1942, more than two months earlier, it was as frayed at the edges as our new fighter group. It read:

The outstanding gallantry and conspicuous daring that the American Volunteer Group combined with their unbelievable efficiency is a source of tremendous pride throughout the whole of America. The fact that they have labored under the shortages and difficulties is keenly appreciated.

We are sending great numbers of new airplanes to bring the 23rd Fighter Group up to full strength and to maintain that strength for the coming critical periods. There are reinforcements on the way, both ground and flying personnel, and more are to come. The United States is making a tremendous effort to get the necessary material into hands of the men overseas. Unfortunately we have lost planes by sinkings in the Indian Ocean and west of Australia which has delayed us at a critical moment, but now planes are going forward rapidly.

Leaves of absence should be given to A.V.G. veterans just as soon as replacements have absorbed your experience, training and tradition for rest and recuperation. It is planned that when replacements are adequately trained selected A.V.G. veterans will be recalled to the States or other theaters of operations to impart their combat experience and training to personnel in newly formed units.

Your President is greatly concerned that the 23rd Group be fully supplied and kept in operation during the critical phase of the operations now pending. He has taken great pride in the worldwide acclaim given the Group and places great hope in its future fighting as rapidly as it is re-equipped.

[signed] FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.

In all fairness to that great man, I learned later that he had been grossly deceived on the true state of affairs in China. When he discovered these deceptions, the presidential wrath descended on the War Department with considerable violence and increased the difficulties of my job since I was suspected as the President's source.

To cover up its strange dealings with the A.V.G. the War Department slapped a heavy blanket of censorship over the change from

A.V.G. to C.A.T.F. on the oft-abused grounds of military security. Japanese radios at Shanghai and Saigon blared nightly with accurate details of the transfer. As is so often the case, it was only the American people who were denied the real facts. The War Department never stopped pretending that all went well with the A.V.G. induction. As late as January 1945 the War Department wrote the House Military Affairs Committee of Congress that 220 of 250 A.V.G.'s had been inducted into the Army in China on July 4, 1942. Official War Department records still show that 5 staff officers, 5 pilots and 19 ground-crew men accepted induction on that date.

From this miserable beginning as the only A.A.F. fighter group activated in the midst of combat, the 23rd Fighter Group went on to become the backbone of the American Air Forces in China and one of the outstanding fighter groups in the world. It shared with the 49th Fighter Group of General George Kenney's Fifth Air Force the honor of being in longest continuous combat with the Japanese. In the three years of its combat history the 23rd destroyed 941 enemy aircraft and maintained an air combat superiority of slightly better than five to one.

The only planes available for the 23rd Group in the summer of 1942 were 51 war-weary veterans of the A.V.G.—31 Tomahawks (P-40B) and 20 Kitty Hawks (P-40E). Only 29 were flyable. At training fields in the States these planes would have been rushed to a scrap heap. In China they had to do for combat. Not until December 1943 did the last P-40B of A.V.G. vintage reach the Kunming salvage dump—more than two and a half years after it had been assembled in Rangoon. The Kitty Hawks flown by the 16th and 15 replacements for the 23rd were the only additional fighter planes to reach China before fall. To keep going during the summer we borrowed 10 Republic Lancers (P-43) from the Chinese Air Force and flew them in combat. The P-43 was a prewar version of the Thunderbolt (P-47) without self-sealing gas tanks or armor plate. Despite General Arnold's oft-repeated boast that only new planes were sent to A.A.F. combat units, Army replacements for China—when they finally arrived—were P-40K's that had already flown hundreds of hours in training schools and combat. Some P-40's sent to China from North Africa had swastikas painted on their cockpits testifying to their previous combat service against the *Luftwaffe*. More than a year later, when the first North American Mustangs (P-51A) reached China, they had had 100 to 150 hours' battering at stateside training fields before they were given to my pilots for combat.

The Japanese managed to come out with at least one new fighter type every year and generally managed to send two or three improved models against us during each fighting season in East China. But until the fall of 1944 our principal fighting was done with P-40's. It seemed to China fighter pilots that no other plane was being manufactured. When "Tex" Hill went home in the fall of 1944 after his second combat tour in China, he saw the last P-40 roll off the Curtiss-Wright assembly line at Buffalo. He wrote back to China that he really didn't believe it.

As it came to China, the P-40 was a fair medium-altitude day fighter and an excellent low-flying ground strafers. Because we had almost nothing else, we used it for everything an air force has to do. It was a standard joke among our pilots that "if we only had a periscope, we could use the P-40 as a submarine."

Although it was not equipped for night work, we used the P-40 as a night fighter and night bomber. To add punch to our tiny bomber force, P-40's carried every type of bomb available and functioned as dive bombers, skip bombers, and low-level sprayers of parafrag clusters. When Chinese armies were cut off and ran low on food and ammunition it was the P-40, dive-bombing with belly tanks loaded with rifle ammunition, rice, and pork cuts, that brought the Chinese their first relief. When a mechanic or staff officer had urgent business at outlying fields, he crawled into the baggage compartment of a P-40 and rode in that cramped blackness to his destination.

Before long-range P-38 photo planes reached China, a single P-40 with a borrowed R.A.F. camera of A.V.G. vintage did all our aerial photo reconnaissance. When the P-40 finally gave way to the P-51B's in the fall of 1944, we were not sorry to see them go. Yet to the Chinese the shark-nosed P-40 will always be the symbol of their deliverance from the terror of Japanese bombings and of the succor Americans gave China in its direst hour of need.

With few exceptions the first Army pilots to reach China matched the quality of the planes. They were ample proof that combat pilots can't be turned out like quick-lunch hamburgers, no matter how urgent the emergency. Most of these pilots were graduates of war-shortened training programs. Many of them paid for this shoddy instruction with their lives. They had little air-gunners practice, no navigation experience, only a smattering of formation flying, and most of them had never flown a P-40. Five of the early arrivals frankly confessed they were afraid to fly combat and were sent back to the Air Transport Command. Another group was admittedly composed of the culls from the 51st Group in India. Captain Johnny Barr of the 51st later

told us that he had been asked to weed out his worst pilots for duty as bomber and transport copilots. These men were then sent by the Tenth Air Force to China as fighter pilots. One DC-3 load of twenty-one Air Forces fighter-pilot replacements for the 23rd arrived in Kunming one morning. Colonel Bob Scott herded them into group headquarters and asked all pilots with more than three hundred hours' flying time to raise their hands. Not a hand went up. Scott told them, "Sorry, boys, but we can't use you here," and sent them packing, back over the Hump to India that afternoon, in the same DC-3 that brought them.

Green pilots were a double liability. We had neither the time, gas, nor planes to spend on training them in China. When they were sent into combat immediately, they jeopardized lives of our veterans by failure to hold formation and lack of flying ability. Combination of old planes and new pilots proved more deadly than the Japanese. A dozen planes were lost in accidents for every one destroyed by the enemy. We concentrated the greenest pilots in the 74th Squadron at Kunming where A.V.G. veteran Major Frank Schiel could operate the squadron as an operational training school. In one seventeen-day period these neophytes cracked up eighteen P-40's on the Kunming field in landing accidents. Not even the Chinese Air Force training schools ever turned in such a sorry performance.

The exceptional pilots who reached China in 1942 were really outstanding. However, few of them were sent to the C.A.T.F. for combat jobs, and there was always a bitter radio from Tenth Air Force headquarters in Delhi when our daily operations report indicated they were fighting. Bissell was a fanatic for meticulous staff work and detailed reports. During the summer he sent me a string of bright young West Pointers who were supposed to remove the "raunchy" taint of the A.V.G. and stiffen C.A.T.F. discipline and staff work. Much to Bissell's chagrin, his bright young West Pointers turned into some of the best combat leaders we ever had. Instead of selling West Point parade-ground discipline, they bought the A.V.G. combat tradition.

Husky, easygoing Colonel Clinton D. (Casey) Vincent of Natchez, Mississippi, was sent to China to be my chief of staff.

After he had been at C.A.T.F. headquarters for a few weeks I advised him, "Casey, you better go out east and find out how it's done before you begin telling the other boys how to do it."

"Casey" fought through some of the hottest battles over East China and shot down six enemy planes before he was grounded for staff work. He learned so fast and well that a year later at the age of 29

he became the youngest general in the A.A.F. and second youngest in the U.S. Army and commanded our vital East China task force.

Colonel Bruce Holloway, a slim, slow-spoken Tennessean, was selected by Bissell to be C.A.T.F. operations officer. Since Bruce had had no combat experience, I transferred him to a fighter squadron. He had a dead-pan face, and I never could tell whether my lectures on tactics ever made any impression on Bruce. A few weeks of fighting showed he had learned all I could teach and added a few wrinkles of his own. He ran up a score of thirteen Japanese planes confirmed and wore himself to a shadow during a year of combat. I finally had to send him home for a rest despite his violent protests. Bruce later commanded the first jet-propelled fighter group in the A.A.F., and under his leadership it became a haven for former China fighter pilots.

Bob Scott, another West Pointer, came to China as a transport pilot and stayed on to fight in our P-40's and command the 23rd Group.

"Ajax" Baumler had signed with the original A.V.G. and was riding the Clipper load of spare parts that was dumped at Wake Island on December 8, 1941. "Ajax" arrived in China six months later as an A.A.F. captain after a trip almost around the world. He had fought previously in the Spanish Civil War and was one of the few American pilots to shoot down German, Italian, and Japanese planes. His notions of military discipline were vague, but in the air he was a cool combat pilot with rare ability in shepherding green pilots through their first fights.

My first chief of staff, Colonel Merian C. Cooper, was a character straight from the Hollywood movies he once directed. A combat pilot in World War I, Cooper also organized the Polish Kosciuszko Squadron to fight against the Russian Red Army before Warsaw in 1920. After his bomber was shot down by the Reds, Cooper spent a year in a Russian prison camp and was banished forever from Russia. Cooper is the only American besides George Washington and Abraham Lincoln to rate a life-size statue in Warsaw. Between wars he made documentary films in Africa and Asia and directed Hollywood thrillers. Pearl Harbor found him in Air Forces intelligence, bound on a mission to Russia via China. The Soviet's long memory stalled Cooper in Chungking, waiting for a Russian visa that never came. One day he appeared in the A.V.G. hostel at Peishiyi carrying his bedroll and announced that he was tired of squatting in Stilwell's Chungking headquarters and wanted a job with an outfit that was fighting.

With his shirttails generally flapping in the breeze, a tousled fringe of hair wreathing his bald spot, a mantle of pipe ashes over his uniform and sagging pants, Cooper would never have passed muster at a



West Point class reunion but he was a brilliant tactician and a prodigious worker. He engineered some of the most successful C.A.T.F. forays. While serving later with General George Kenney's Fifth Air Force he planned the strikes on Wewak and Hollandia that broke the back of Japanese airpower in the southwest Pacific. When planning a mission for the C.A.T.F., Cooper worked around the clock until every detail was satisfactory and then rode the nose of the lead bomber peering over the bombardier's shoulder at the target.

Cooper was no diplomat. He made no secret of his contempt for the Stilwell-Bissell policy of timid defense in India and complete neglect of the strategic possibilities of China. It wasn't long before Bissell was suggesting Cooper's removal on grounds of ill health and offering a West Pointer in exchange. Stilwell finally ordered Cooper's return to the United States over my vigorous protests. The War Department quashed every attempt to get him back to China.

The brass-bound atmosphere of Washington failed to squelch Cooper. He continued to tell the China story to anybody who would listen, including his numerous newspaper friends, knowing full well that he was sacrificing all chance for promotion. Later he served in a major general's job for two years in the Southwest Pacific, and George Kenney recommended him for a general's star many times. Cooper finished the war still a colonel. The War Department's memory was almost as long as the Russians'. Cooper had committed the unforgivable sin of being frank and truthful about a situation that Stilwell and his superiors were trying desperately to obscure with unnecessary censorship.

Our bombers were part of the 11th Bomb Squadron—one of the oldest squadrons in the Air Corps with a combat record dating back from World War I through the Dutch East Indies campaign of 1942. In 1919 I had been a flight commander of the 11th when it was assigned to Mexican Border patrol, and one of my fellow border pilots was Jimmy Doolittle. After a bad beginning in which three out of five Mitchell (B-25) bombers were lost over the Hump, the 11th Bomb Squadron became the spearhead of the China air offensive. It had exceptional leaders.

Brigadier General Caleb V. Haynes looked like a gorilla and flew like an angel. He was one of the first B-17 pilots and pioneered development of long-range heavy bombers, flying the giant experimental XB-15, then the largest plane in the service. Haynes flew the XB-15 on a record-shattering flight to deliver two tons of serum to victims of an epidemic following the Santiago, Chile, earthquake. He made

many of the first survey flights for the Air Transport Command's world-wide routes with Curtis LeMay as his navigator. Haynes had commanded the group of heavy bombers slated to bomb Japan from China after the Doolittle raid. When that project was scrapped, he flew transports evacuating civilian refugees from Burma and arrived in China flying some of the first supplies to cross the Hump.

Lieutenant Colonel Bill Bayse had fought through the Indies as a Flying Fortress pilot and came to China as first commander of the Eleventh. Major "Brick" Holstrom, who succeeded him, was one of the Doolittle Tokyo raiders.

Among the ground crews we had R.A.F. mechanics who followed the A.V.G. out of Burma, former Navy men from the A.V.G. who chose their old Navy blues over the Army khaki, and Chinese civilian mechanics. Chinese troops did all our guard duty while the W.A.S.C. continued to house and feed us.

The C.A.T.F. lived off the land like a pack of hungry mastiffs. China was completely cut off from the rest of the world—sealed in a military vacuum between the Japanese, the Gobi Desert, and the frozen Himalayan peaks. Only an occasional Army plane crossed the Hump from India. The idea of an aerial supply line was still fantastic to orthodox military minds although DC-3's of C.N.A.C. were showing what could be done with a small but steady trickle of airborne supplies into China.

We used anything and almost everything we could find in China. We ate locally raised rice, bean sprouts, pork, eggs, and chickens and drank tea instead of coffee. We used bamboo and straw to make dummy P-40's for our airfields. Chinese made belly tanks for us out of bamboo and fish glue to stretch the P-40's range. We dipped deeply into Chinese ammunition and gas dumps. At one time we had eleven different nationalities of machine-gun ammunition including Japanese, and we dropped French-, Russian-, and Chinese-manufactured bombs.

Later in the war when Stilwell's headquarters in Chungking and a group of American newspaper correspondents, who seldom strayed far from the Chungking press hostel, were trying to discredit everything Chinese, the cry of hoarding military supplies was raised. These dumps of bombs, ammunition, and 100-octane gas that existed around airfields all over Free China were cited as proof that the Chinese were not using American lend-lease supplies to fight the Japanese but were storing them for civil war against the Chinese Communists.

I helped the Chinese "hoard" those supplies. Most of them were paid for in cash in early 1940 long before lend-lease began. Some of them were smuggled from Hong Kong into small Chinese ports for the

far-eastern fields in Chekiang and Kiangsi. Some of them came up the Yunnan railroad from Haiphong, and some of them were trucked up the Burma Road from Rangoon and Mandalay. The Chinese had no air force then and no allies. But they stored those gas drums, bombs, and bullets near fields in Free China against the day when there might be an air force in China. They were aware that when that day came, China's rickety internal-transport system might be unable to move supplies fast enough to meet emergencies, and so they cached these stores wherever they anticipated future need.

During the summer of 1942 the China Air Task Force existed almost entirely on those "hoarded" supplies. The Assam-Burma-China Ferry Command run by Generals Brereton and Naiden was delivering less tonnage to China than C.N.A.C. But for the foresight and energy of the Chinese in accumulating these "hoards," our fighters and bombers would have squatted helplessly on the ground.

Organization of the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations had already assumed the complexity and unwieldiness that aggravated so many of its problems. As C.B.I. commander, Stilwell had headquarters in Chungking and New Delhi over 1,500 miles apart. The Tenth Air Force with headquarters in Delhi controlled supplies, personnel, and operations of the C.A.T.F., which was operating as far as 2,000 miles away. Communications from C.A.T.F. to the Chinese had to go to Delhi and back to travel the 20 miles from our headquarters at Peishiyi to the Chinese War Ministry in Chungking. General Brereton, first commander of the Tenth moved on to the Middle East to command the Ninth Air Force. Brigadier General Earl Naiden succeeded Brereton for a brief tenure and was replaced by Bissell late in August.

During the summer C.B.I. headquarters and the Tenth Air Force exhibited studied indifference to what went on in China. Allied strategy regarded China as a lost cause, and all available resources were being concentrated for the defense of India against the anticipated Japanese invasion. My only orders from Delhi were a vague admonition to defend the Hump aerial supply route and specific orders to keep the Japanese from using Myitkyina airdrome by constant bombing. Even Stilwell was aware that enemy use of northern Burma airdromes was impossible until monsoon rains ended. He quickly countermanded Naiden's orders for all-out bombing of Myitkyina, leaving me free to carry out my own plans.

The China Air Task Force, with a top fighting strength of 40 fighters and 7 bombers, faced a Japanese air force totaling 350 to 450 planes dotted along a 2,000-mile arc from Hankow through Hong Kong and

Indo-China to Burma. Our only defense was a good offense. Only hope for survival lay in using mobility and surprise to strike the Japanese all along their perimeter, preventing them from concentrating their forces against us for a knockout blow.

The monsoon blanketing Burma throughout the summer kept the Japanese grounded there until the fall break in weather. Chinese radio code intercepts and the warning net gave us ample warning of air reinforcements moving to Burma. There was ample opportunity to attack them while they staged through Hainan Island, Canton, and Indo-China before they reached Burma. My plan was to let the monsoon protect our rear in West China while the bulk of the C.A.T.F. took the offensive in East China. Our best fighter pilots were concentrated in the 75th Squadron under "Tex" Hill, the 76th, commanded by Ed Rector, and the 16th. These squadrons combined with the Mitchells of the 11th Bomb Squadron were organized into a highly mobile air task force capable of striking anywhere in China within forty-eight hours. Even my headquarters was organized so it could fit into a DC-3, continue operations in flight, and be ready for action within an hour after landing.

Our tactics were to use every advantage of interior lines of communication, the Chinese warning net, seasonal weather, range of our planes, and the Japanese orthodox combat habits to retain the initiative, jab the Japanese off balance with surprise thrusts at widely separated targets, and keep their numerically superior forces on the defensive. It was the principle of the Confederate cavalry leaders in the War between the States applied to modern air war. With our tiny but mobile air task force, we could cut Japanese communications, destroy supplies, batter their bases, and create confusion in their rear out of all proportion to our admittedly tiny effort.

A Japanese photo plane could record most of C.A.T.F. strength on Kunming Airfield one afternoon, and twenty-four hours later the enemy in Canton, seven hundred miles away, would be heads down in slit trenches, listening to our bombs exploding. By the time a raid was organized to catch us, we were in the north pounding Hankow or back in Kunming. For over a year, when our forces were so small that ordinary defensive tactics would have doomed us to extinction, we kept the Japanese guessing with this aerial shell game all the way from Burma to the Yangtze.

Key to these tactics was the first chain of eastern bases about two hundred miles apart along the Siang River line—Hengyang in the north, Lingling in the middle, Kweilin in the south, and Chihkiang,

one hundred and fifty miles due north of Kweilin. These fields were little more than fighter strips in 1942 with a single 3,000-foot runway built by hand by thousands of Chinese from crushed rock and mud. The field at Kweilin nestled in a flat valley of rice paddies among the black limestone ice-cream-cone peaks of Kwangsi Province. Huge water-worn caves in these mountains gave us a bombproof operations office, headquarters, air-raid shelters, and a welcome refuge from the steamy summer heat. Runways at Hengyang and Lingling were built on the red clay banks of the winding Siang River with a former girls' school providing living quarters at Hengyang and a mud, bamboo, and tile hostel bordering the field at Lingling. What these fields lacked in facilities they made up in durability. It was impossible to bomb them out. No matter how many holes Japanese bombardiers punched in the runways, hordes of Chinese coolies repaired the damage in a few hours. After one heavy bombing at Kweilin forty-five craters were filled in less than two hours. The only way the Japanese could destroy the effectiveness of these fields was to catch our planes on the ground, and the Chinese warning net made that task extremely difficult.

Working conditions on the fields were incredibly bad. Pilots and mechanics sweltered in the sticky, oppressive heat of the East China summer and shivered in the cold rains that broke heat waves. There were no hangars or shelters for planes. Few mechanics had coveralls. To save their only change of clothes, they worked in shorts and shoes, burned by the sun, soaked by rain. To keep our battered and worn planes flying, they worked from before sunrise to long after dark with only the light of a smoky kerosene lamp or hand flashlight to guide them. Working at night they were eaten alive by insects attracted by the lights.

There were no spare parts and few tools. Even such simple tools as wrenches and pliers were at a premium. The 75th Squadron at Hengyang had only two sets of hand tools belonging to former A.V.G. mechanics to service the entire squadron. Administrative facilities were even more scanty. At Hengyang the 75th set up shop with one Chinese pencil, a sheaf of rice paper, and an ancient portable typewriter borrowed once a week from a Presbyterian missionary. Its administrative staff consisted of a first sergeant and a mechanic who could also type. At Kweilin the 76th functioned for more than a year with only one ground officer, Captain Byron Smith, who served as adjutant, executive officer, intelligence officer, personnel officer, supply officer, and mess officer.

Living conditions were bad. Food was good by Chinese standards,

but Americans found it hard to stomach a steady diet of fat, greasy pork, sweet potatoes, bean sprouts, and rice. One Chinese cook at Lingling fried his fish in tung oil and made the entire base sick. Dysentery, yellow jaundice, and malaria were prevalent. Once the entire 11th Bomb Squadron was forced to suspend operations for a week because most of its flight personnel had dysentery. There were no flight surgeons for the squadrons. Colonel Thomas Gentry, A.V.G. chief flight surgeon, who joined the Army, was assigned to a non-combat outfit in Kunming. Wounded and sick were cared for by medical missionaries who happened to be in the vicinity. All during American air operations in China we found missionaries of all creeds and nationalities to be a never failing source of help whenever we needed it.

Smoky kerosene lamps in hostels were too dim for reading or writing. Even beds were soggy in the steaming heat. Green mold appeared overnight on shoes and equipment. There were movies but no sound equipment. The men were so starved for entertainment they watched the silent talkies and tried to read the actors' lips. Some bases were without soap, razor blades, and cigarettes for months at a time. The C.A.T.F. worked and fought under conditions far worse than those of the A.V.G. without the spur of higher salaries and combat bonuses.

Our first forays to the east began soon after the 11th Bomb Squadron arrived in China and before the A.V.G. dissolved. Beginning on June 20, C. V. Haynes and Bill Bayse led the 11th on a series of raids from Hengyang and Kweilin that dropped the first American bombs on Hankow and Canton. They made five raids in six flying days and were back in Kunming on July 7. I pressed the offensive for as long as the A.V.G. volunteers stayed on. Fighters bombed and strafed in support of Chinese armies who were battling the Japanese offensive in revenge for the Doolittle raid.

By mid-July the bombers were back east for another series of raids. Haynes led four raids in six days, hitting the Hankow docks, Tien Ho Airdrome at Canton, the Yangtze port of Kiukiang, and Japanese field headquarters near Liuchwan. With the bombers on their way back to Kunming went the last A.V.G. volunteers. All attempts to induce them to stay on longer failed. Bob Neale and his crew chief Harry Fox came in to say good-by to me with tears streaming down their lean tanned cheeks, but they wouldn't stay. We were left with the handful of A.V.G. veterans—"Tex" Hill, Ed Rector, Gil Bright, Frank Schiel, and Charley Sawyer—and green Army pilots.

The Japs were fooled by the official end of the A.V.G. on July 4.

They threw everything they had at Hengyang on July 5 and 6—and met A.V.G. veterans. They lost more than thirty airplanes in their attempt to destroy the “newly arrived” U.S. Army air units. When the last of the A.V.G.’s departed from the eastern fields on July 19, the Japanese tried another air blitz to wipe out the C.A.T.F. These attacks came late in July and August and repeated in September. A crack fighter group was moved from the Kwantung Army in Manchuria to deliver the *coup de grâce*. This group was equipped with a new Jap fighter—the Oscar Mark I—a vastly improved version of the old, fixed-gear Nate, which preserved most of the Nate’s incredible maneuverability and added speed, firepower, and ceiling. The Oscar’s performance was also superior to the original Zero. In the hands of an experienced pilot, the Oscar could fly rings around a P-40. If the Jap pilots had utilized performance advantage of the Oscar fully, the P-40’s would not have had a chance. The Oscar appeared about the same time full-color Curtiss-Wright ads were trumpeting to American magazine readers the invincibility of the P-40. Apparently Air Force headquarters in Washington paid more attention to the Curtiss ads than to our urgent appeals for Mustangs, because we continued to get nothing but P-40’s for two solid years, long after every other American air force was equipped with newer and better fighters.

The Japanese led off with night bombers to pit the Hengyang runway with craters. Their plan was to keep our fighters from taking off at dawn when the Japanese fighters hit. It was a good idea and would have worked but for the antlike toil of Chinese in speedily filling the bomb holes. Night raiders bombed Hengyang after midnight on July 28, but “Tex” Hill led five P-40’s off the repaired runway at dawn to dive-bomb Canton. Turned back because of bad weather to the south, the flight was nearing Hengyang when the Chinese net reported heavy engine noise in the north and an estimated seventy Japanese fighters heading for Hengyang. “Tex” parried this attack with nothing more lethal than a microphone. Aware that the Japanese generally monitored the American combat radio frequency, “Tex” began giving orders for deployment of imaginary fighter squadrons. His mates quickly sensed his intentions and responded with acknowledgments indicating at least forty American fighters in the air. The Japanese apparently didn’t like the sound of things and headed back toward Hankow.

Night bombers appeared again on July 29, and this time “Tex” Hill, “Ajax” Baumler, and Johnny Alison were up in P-40’s to meet them. By staying low they hoped to spot the bombers’ blue-white exhausts

as they approached the field. Ground radio gave them plots on the approaching Japs, and Alison picked them up as they crossed the Siang River and headed out to maneuver for a bomb run. Alison pulled up to point-blank range on the lead bomber when they turned into their run on the field. In following the bombers' turn, Alison came out slightly above them and was silhouetted in the bright moonlight. Rear gunner of one bomber opened up at almost point-blank range, spraying Alison's P-40 from prop to rudder. A tracer scorched Alison's arm, his prop was hit several times, a large hole was blown out of the crankcase, and the fuselage punctured a dozen times. With his plane a wreck, Alison never deviated from his objective. He poured a stream of fire into the lead bomber and saw it suddenly stream oil like a bleeding whale and pull up in a climbing turn. Alison moved over and gave the Jap wingman a burst that blew him up in a swath of orange flame. He damaged the third with a similar burst. By this time Alison's plane was about finished. Because we were so desperately short of spare parts, Johnny decided to ride it down for what salvage there might be rather than bail out while he had a chance. At 2,000 feet the oil in his shattered crankcase caught fire.

He was then too close to the field to make a landing, and the last anybody saw of Alison he was streaking across the field at 200 feet, heading for the river with his engine ablaze. Everybody assumed he could hardly survive the inevitable crash. "Ajax" Baumler finished off the third bomber and got the fourth north of Hengyang. When "Tex" Hill landed and learned that Alison was presumed to be dead he was furious. "Tex's" war was always a very personal war, and he took the loss of a buddy extremely hard. When the Chinese net reported plots from the north early the next day, "Tex" led ten P-40's into the air with a cold determination that boded ill for his opponents. Meanwhile Alison had nursed his flaming P-40 to a crash landing in the river east of Hengyang. Johnny survived with a badly cut head to get the Distinguished Service Cross for his night's work. He had been taken to a Catholic missionary who sewed up his head and put him up for a rest. Johnny, very much alive, watched the next morning's fight from the mission compound as "Tex" flew out to avenge his "death."

The Japs sailed in with 35 Oscars in a widespread loose V formation. From the opposite direction came "Tex" with 10 P-40's behind him. "Tex" singled out the Japanese formation leader and then ensued one of the strangest sights ever seen in air combat. "Tex" headed for the Jap leader in a head-on pass with both of them shooting and



closing the range at better than 600 miles an hour. It was like a pair of old-fashioned Western gunmen shooting it out on the main street of some cow town. Watching from the ground, a collision seemed certain. Neither would give an inch.

At the last split second before a crash, the Jap pushed over into a steep dive. "Tex" barely brushed over his cockpit. The Jap trailed a thin plume of smoke. He must have been badly hit, for he circled over the field and then deliberately pushed over into a vertical dive, holding it until he crashed into a row of bamboo dummy P-40's parked on the field. It was the first kamikaze on record. After the fight "Tex" landed through the smoke of the still-smoldering Oscar. He ambled over to the wreck where the dismembered body of the Jap leader (a major complete with samurai sword) lay near his plane. With the pointed toe of his cowboy boot, "Tex" poked at the blackened and severed head and looked squarely into the sightless eyes.

"You tried to kill me, you little bastard," "Tex" drawled coldly. "Two can play at that game."

"Tex" flew himself to a frazzle during those critical days. He turned down a lucrative transport job with C.N.A.C. to join the Army and stay on with me. "Tex" was a former Navy torpedo and dive-bomber pilot and had no love for the Army. He stayed on only because "somebody has to finish this dirty job." He ranked next to Bob Neale in the A.V.G. and ran his string of Japanese planes destroyed to eighteen before he left China.

During the Jap blitz against Hengyang, "Tex" flew alone to Hankow at night to dive-bomb the airdrome and give the other pilots a respite from the sleep-wrecking enemy raids. Hankow was then the most heavily defended target in China. His night solo raid kept the Japs too busy to bomb Hengyang that night. "Tex" flew through most of the summer with acute malaria, because there was nobody else with his experience to lead the green pilots in combat. He won the British and American Distinguished Flying Crosses with the A.V.G., was awarded a Silver Star for his solo against Hankow, and got a second American D.F.C. for sinking a Japanese gunboat in a dive-bombing attack at Kiukiang. He was so sick when he returned from that mission he could hardly climb out of his cockpit and walk to the operations shack.

It was his type of leadership that kept a strong A.V.G. flavor in the C.A.T.F. and Fourteenth Air Force and made so many pilots and ground crews in China continue to work and fight so hard when every-

thing else went wrong and all other motives lost force and meaning.

The Japanese fighters and bombers rolled over Hengyang for seventy-two hours mixing night bombing with daylight fighter sweeps. At the end of three days the Japanese had lost twenty-one planes to two planes and one pilot of the C.A.T.F. On August 5 the Japanese made their final assault with thirty Oscars, approaching Hengyang in a defensive Lufberry circle. The defensive nature of their formation was an incredible confession of defeat. We had only eight P-40's still fit for combat. Johnny Alison led them into the Japanese circle and broke it up shooting down four Oscars with the loss of Lieutenant Lee Minor.

That performance ended the Japanese dream of wiping out the C.A.T.F. For more than a month they made no sorties against the eastern bases while our fighter-bomber team stabbed at a dozen points along the Japanese perimeter from Lashio to Hankow. Our last raid hit Haiphong in French Indo-China, setting fire to huge coal piles awaiting shipment to Japan and damaging the dock area.

On its return from the Haiphong raid August 12, the C.A.T.F. was worn out. Both its men and its machines were overworked and undersupplied. There was hardly enough gas left in the eastern bases for a single air battle. Maintenance problems were too great even for the ingenuity and energy of the C.A.T.F. ground crews. All the P-40 Allison engines were long past due on major overhauls—some with as many as three hundred hours without proper repair. We ran out of everything. Engine oil was filtered and used over and over again until even our battered Allisons choked on it. Tires were a terrible problem. We got nothing but four-ply tires from India supply depots. Rocky China runways cut them to ribbons. Often they blew out on the first landing, wrecking a plane in a ground loop. Not until a year later did six-ply tires arrive. Tail-wheel tires were always short. Many pilots made combat flights with tail-wheel casings stuffed with rags. Carburetors were so worn that automatic mixture controls wouldn't work. Even safety wire and cotter pins were unobtainable. Vital parts had to be safetied with ordinary soft wire.

We withdrew to Kunming to rest and refit. In early September I tried to make another strike in the east. Of the 15 P-40's that flew to Kweilin only 8 could fly again after the first mission. One engine quit on take-off. An electrical system short-circuited giving the pilot violent shocks. Another electrical system failed after take-off. When the pilot had a Jap plane in his gunsight, the electrical solenoids failed to fire his guns. Another pilot made a belly landing in the midst of a fight

because his engine quit. Investigation showed that all of these failures were due to wear and tear without adequate replacement of worn parts.

The next day the Japs surged over Hongyang, Lingling, and Kweilin trying to catch the remaining 8 P-40's. They lost 5 out of 40 Oscars, but only 6 P-40's could limp back to Kunming. We were down to 38 pilots for 34 flyable P-40's with only two days' gas left at Kunming.

The China Air Task Force, unbroken in combat, was facing death from acute starvation.

# 13.

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DURING the fall, the China Air Task Force was forged into a new weapon with a sharper cutting edge. By October airborne supplies were dribbling across the Hump into Kunming. Flying accidents weeded out our worst pilots, and the summer fighting tempered the best newcomers into confident veterans. Reinforcements promised for June arrived in late September—a half-dozen additional B-25 bombers, worn P-40K fighters, and twenty superb fighter pilots seasoned by a year of flying P-40's in Panama.

These Panama pilots from the Sixth Fighter Command were the kind of pilots I wanted for the A.V.G. but could never get in quantity. All of them learned to fly in the rigorous prewar Air Corps training regime. They were expert fighter boys with ample experience in long-range navigation, gunnery, dive-bombing, and tight formation flying. Ironically most of them tried to join the A.V.G. in 1941. The Army refused to release them because they were then defending the Panama Canal. This group of Panama postgraduates produced some of the finest pilots ever to fight in China. Their names—Hampshire, Pryor, Wilcox, Richardson, Brookfield, Blackstone, Little, Tempest, Gordon, Grosvenor, and Stewart—studded the combat reports. For more than a year they were the backbone of the China fighter squadrons. After they arrived the C.A.T.F. smacked less of a primary training school and more of a combat group. The Japanese soon felt the difference.

Fall brought an end to the monsoon screen over West China. From October to December fighting weather was good in both East and West China requiring even more adroit manipulation of our squadrons. There were many signs during early October that the Japanese were preparing heavy blows against the aerial supply line over the Hump and its terminals in Assam and Yunnan. Reconnaissance over French Indo-China in late September showed a sudden increase in

enemy fighter strength around Hanoi that indicated staging operations under way from Formosa to Burma. The C.A.T.F. hit Gia Lam Airdrome near Hanoi twice in the last week of September destroying seventeen twin-engine fighters. On October 3 I radioed the following urgent warning to Bissell in Delhi:

Possibility enemy air attack on Dinjan other bases supporting ferry route in India stop Kunming and western Yunnan bases as well as ferry route itself in making stop Enemy reported having changed all radio call signs on October first stop This always done before Japs start new offensive stop Enemy reported building up radio net in Burma as number ground radio stations of Japanese Air Force transferred there and have commenced operating stop Reported full strength of 60th and 98th heavy-bomber flying regiments and 31st and 24th light-bombing regiments and Yasamoto squadron reconnaissance have been moved to Saigon from Formosa stop Also ground radio 98th enemy bombers installed Toungoo south airport stop North airfield Toungoo reported under repair stop Expect movement of enemy air forces into north Burma from Saigon as soon as ground installation ready stop Above from qualified Chinese intelligence stop Am checking it with other sources stop Also fairly reliable reports movement enemy air groups from Canton area to Indo-China probably fighters stop my own reconnaissance confirms increased fighter strength Indo-China and completion north-south runway at Lashio.

Two days later I warned Col. Scott in Kunming:

Put Kunming on full alert stop From now on we must be ready for enemy attacks.

There were many signs of renewed ground activity on the Salween front indicating the Japanese might attempt to follow their aerial blows with a crossing of the Salween in force and a drive toward Kunming. Success of this offensive still offered the same strategic dividends for the Japanese as it had the previous spring. It was still the only possibility of knocking China out of the war. Japanese ground forces were completely dependent on the Burma Road as the supply artery for the Salween front. Munitions, rice, and fuel dumps were concealed in every straw-thatched village along the road. Trucks, mule trains, and unwilling Burmese coolies were the only methods of moving supplies north of Lashio, and all were vulnerable to air attack.

With a relatively small effort the C.A.T.F. was able to keep the enemy supply system sufficiently disjunct to make it impossible to accumulate enough materiel in advanced positions for a major offensive. The Japs were never able to support more than a few small patrols on the east bank of the Salween, and their long-anticipated major offensive never materialized despite the weakness of the Chinese defenses.

C.A.T.F. fighters in groups of two to six made regular sweeps of the Burma Road and its subsidiary networks of mountain trails, dive-bombing supply dumps and strafing convoys. B-25 bombers hit large dumps, airfields, and bombed bridges as far south as Lashio. Because the 11th Bomb Squadron had only one Norden bombsight, a single B-25 would carry as many as four bombardiers to give them practice with the bombsight in repeated runs over targets. These missions were relatively short and enabled the C.A.T.F. to keep fighting even on the fast-dwindling supplies at the Yunnan fields. As a result the Japanese were reluctant to keep any air strength on northern Burma fields. The air as far south as Lashio belonged to us. One Jap effort to operate a dozen dive bombers from Kengtung on the lower Salween, in support of ground troops, was quickly stopped by a C.A.T.F. strafing mission that burned eleven of the planes on the airfield and shot down the twelfth as it took off.

All the time we were hacking away at the Japanese in Burma our heaviest thinking was devoted to methods of luring new Japanese fighters into the limited killing range of the P-40. The new Oscars, twin-engine Nicks, and the new clipped-wing Zero known as the Hamp all had a tremendous altitude advantage over the P-40. Combined with their superior rate of climb, these planes could make life miserable for the P-40 by sitting up at 25,000 feet, where the P-40 staggered helplessly, and making diving attacks with climbing breakaways. The P-40 was at its best between 15,000 and 18,000 feet. Above 20,000 feet it rapidly reached a point of diminishing returns. My plan was to use the 11th Squadron bombers as bait, sending them in to bomb at 15,000 feet with P-40's stacked above to 18,000 feet. In order to get at the bombers, Jap fighters would have to sacrifice their altitude advantage and run the gantlet of our fighter cover at the P-40's best altitude.

To spring this trap we needed an important target that the Japanese could not afford to leave undefended. Good possibility for surprise was also a major requirement. A few fighters were kept at the eastern fields to reconnoiter Jap strongholds and provide a flow of

potential target data. As the C.A.T.F. grew strong enough to venture east again, Hong Kong seemed to be our best bet.

This great port had fallen with its tremendous harbor and well equipped docks and shipyards intact. As the fighting in the Solomons and New Guinea became tougher the Japanese began to use Hong Kong and Kowloon as a major staging area for convoys headed for the southwest Pacific. Damaged ships were repaired in the Royal Navy shipyard, the finest naval facility east of Singapore. Convoys were loaded and fueled at Kai-Tak, Kowloon, and Victoria docks and assembled in the roadstead between Kowloon and Victoria Island.

When Chinese intelligence informed us that a large convoy was assembling at Hong Kong in late October, we decided to strike. Aerial reconnaissance confirmed the presence of good shipping targets. Colonel Cooper went on one of his round-the-clock planning spasms, plotting a series of swift, sharp blows against Hong Kong mixed with feints and jabs at nearby Canton to keep the enemy guessing.

Missions were planned in minute detail to squeeze every possible advantage from our attack. Courses were laid to cross the coast over Free China and attempt surprise by swinging back toward Hong Kong from the sea. For blows at Canton we used a narrow corridor where the Chinese lines reached to within fifty miles of Canton, giving the Japanese less than five minutes' warning. By waiting for the noonday sun, we could give the P-40's the cover of its blinding rays against Japanese fighters climbing to attack. With short warning, Jap fighter pilots would face the dilemma of making a quick pass at the bombers and setting themselves up for a perfect P-40 attack or climbing into an advantage over the P-40's and allowing the bombers to bomb unmolested. Knowing the Japanese, I expected them to sail into the bombers, but either choice spelled disaster.

Caleb Haynes was particularly enthusiastic about the Hong Kong raids. For some time the Japanese radio had been reassuring its listeners that they had nothing to fear from American bombers in China because they were led by "an old broken-down transport pilot named Haynes." Caleb smarted under these gibes. For the Hong Kong mission he had quantities of leaflets printed at his own expense with English and Japanese versions of "these bombs come with the compliments of the old broken-down transport pilot Haynes."

The 22nd Bomb Squadron in India agreed to add a dozen B-25's to the 11th's contingent, but when we were ready to move only one 22nd bomber was in China. On October 24 the C.A.T.F. rendezvoused at Kweilin. By midnight there were twelve B-25's and ten P-40's on

the field, and my headquarters were again in the limestone operations cave. The next morning our force dropped the first Allied bombs on Hong Kong. "Tex" Hill led the fighter cover with Caleb Haynes heading the bombers. Colonel Cooper was in the nose of Haynes's B-25 squinting over the shoulder of Harold "Butch" Morgan, the lead bombardier. The attack was a complete surprise. The B-25's dropped their loads of Russian-made bombs into Kowloon, and Haynes's rice-paper leaflets were fluttering down before the enemy fighters attacked. Twenty gray Navy Zekes climbed off Sanchau Island. Six twin-engine Nicks took off from Kai-Tak strip at Kowloon. They were lining up for a pass at the homeward-bound bombers when the P-40's pounced on them out of the sun, like a flock of vultures spotting carrion. Haynes racked his bomber in a steep diving turn into the Jap fighters. The 22nd Squadron B-25 lagged far behind on the turn and fell behind the formation where it was jumped by six Zekes. After its gunners had exhausted their ammunition in knocking down two of the attacking sextet, the remaining Japs drove the B-25 to a crash landing. A pilot and navigator were captured on the ground but the rest of the crew escaped. In sixty-five bombing missions flown by the C.A.T.F., this was the only bomber ever lost to enemy action. In a running fight halfway to Canton the rest of the bombers and P-40's claimed thirteen enemy fighters destroyed without further loss. That night the Japanese radio announced that "only twenty Jap fighters had been lost in repulsing American bombers." Chinese intelligence later confirmed twenty Jap wrecks between Canton and Hong Kong.

Unfortunately bombing accuracy with Russian bombs left something to be desired. Principal victims of the first Hong Kong raid were Chinese civilians and the stores piled up along the western water front of Kowloon Peninsula. However, the raid marked Hong Kong as one of our major targets, and for three years we pounded it with an ever increasing weight of bombs. We mined the harbor, skip- and dive-bombed shipping in the roadstead, pounded the docks, oil-storage-tank farms, and shipyards from high altitude and strafed Kai-Tak and Sanchau Island airdromes. When Major General Festing led the British occupation forces into Hong Kong in the summer of 1945 he found the harbor clogged with sunken ships and all but one of the five major dock areas knocked out by our long campaign against the port.

Back in Kweilin the bombers barely had time for a quick supper and briefing before they were back on their way to a double thrust, smashing at the Hong Kong power plant and Tien Ho Airdrome at Canton.



By knocking out the power plant we hoped to retard repairs of bomb damage. Attack on Tien Ho was to ground Jap fighters there preliminary to a dawn raid on shipping at Whampoa docks below Canton. The next afternoon we planned to smash at ships and docks around Hong Kong until our gas and bombs were exhausted.

At 1 A.M. while I was in the operations cave watching Chinese net reports on the Hong Kong raiders coming home and Butch Morgan's flight heading for Canton, an urgent ZZZZ radio arrived from Bissell in Delhi. It said, "Bomb Lashio and Myitkyina airdromes until further notice beginning at dawn."

I was so angry I could hardly contain myself. My staff in the cave later told me they expected me to bounce off the ceiling in my rage. Lashio and Myitkyina were eight hundred miles away. Half my bombers were still in the air, and the other half were gassed and bombed to smash at the overripe targets in Hong Kong again at dawn.

I could guess what had happened. The Japs had launched their long-anticipated attack on the Hump bases, and Bissell had been badly caught with his planes on the ground. Despite our early warning of the enemy build-up in Burma, the Japanese hit the Tenth Air Force at Dinjan with complete surprise. Only two of twenty P-40's got into the air. A dozen P-40's and ten DC-3's, more than half the Hump transport force, were smashed on the ground. Another Jap attack aimed at Kunming was met a hundred miles south of the city, where our P-40's shot down six Nicks without loss and turned back the raiders.

Bombing the empty Jap fields at Lashio and Myitkyina were futile counterblows. C.A.T.F. reconnaissance had indicated there were no facilities at either place to stage a major raid. These raiders had obviously come from Toungoo and Chiengmai. I could readily understand Bissell's chagrin at being caught flat-footed by the attack. But the logic of his decision to bomb empty airfields still escapes me. Neither could I understand the military reasoning that ordered gas and bombs flown across the Hump to China at a tremendous cost and then burned that gas to fly the bombs halfway back to India to be dumped on Burma targets that could be reached by India-based bombers. Yet until the separation of the C.B.I. into two theaters late in 1944, this policy persisted. All efforts to modify it were futile.

Orders, no matter how asinine, are still orders. I radioed the lone B-25 at Kunming to hit Lashio at dawn. The rest of the Mitchells headed back to Kunming and joined in this futile labor. However, I was unwilling to leave Kweilin without another smash at Hong Kong.

Every available P-40 was loaded with a 500-pound bomb. In the face of heavy flak and fierce Jap fighter attacks, they dive-bombed shipping in Victoria harbor sinking a tanker and several freighters. Captain P. B. O'Connell pressed home his dive-bombing attack on the tanker despite heavy fire from a pair of Zekes on his tail. Seconds after his bomb hit the tanker his P-40 blew up and crashed into the harbor.

The fighters were left at Kweilin another day to cut down the retaliatory raids we expected from the Japanese. They came over Kweilin on schedule and left sixteen wrecks in the Kwangsi rice paddies with a loss of one P-40 and pilot.

By the end of November the C.A.T.F. was back in Kweilin for another swoop around the eastern targets. First raid on November 23 hunted shipping in the Gulf of Tonkin off Indo-China. It netted an enemy transport, set fire to coal piles at Hongay, and strafed Japanese barracks at Haiphong. The next day the B-25's went out in two formations, one bombing the airdrome at Sanchau Island and the other hitting Tien Ho. Sanchau was empty, but the Japs at Tien Ho were caught by surprise. Only two fighters got off the ground. Both were shot down. The bombers made an unhurried and accurate run over the parking area. Chinese intelligence reported forty-two fighters and bombers damaged. The third day the Whampoa docks were hit again, and a freighter unloading aircraft engines was sunk.

Then we feinted to the north, staging out of Hengyang for strikes on the Jap supply bases at Sianning, Yochow, and Hankow on the same day. This gave the Japs at Canton a day to smart under their losses and move in more fighters, making the field ripe for another smash.

To protect the bombers staging out of Hengyang from enemy night raiders, five P-40 pilots volunteered to make a night raid on Hankow to keep the Jap bombers there grounded. Hitting Hankow just after dark, they dive-bombed the airfield and docks, strafed searchlights, and shot up hangars in the face of the heaviest flak in China.

Early the next day—November 27—our entire striking force was back in Kweilin. Before noon they were off again to Canton to spring the trap we had so carefully baited. We figured the Japanese would have a big fighter force assembled at Canton to crush any attempts to repeat the previous surprise. Our object was to lure this force into a showdown fight at the P-40's altitude. The bombers, as usual, played the role of live bait. Accompanying them were twenty-one P-40's, the largest fighter force I had ever been able to put into the air.

Colonel Cooper had made the rounds of the Kweilin cafés the night

before, dropping discreet indiscretions about the terrible shellacking scheduled for the Japs at Hong Kong. The C.A.T.F. formation headed straight for Hong Kong. At the last minute the bombers cut sharply toward Canton and caught the Japanese flat-footed. As the bombers made their drop on the Whampoa docks, enemy fighters were swarming up off Tien Ho and White Cloud airdromes. For once the P-40's had an altitude advantage, and they made the most of it. For forty-five minutes the fight raged over Canton. Flaming Jap fighters fell back onto their airdromes almost as fast as they reached the P-40's altitude. Final score for the day was 27 to 0 for the C.A.T.F. It was one of the worst lickings the Japs took over China, and it happened in full view of the Cantonese Chinese. There was no time for Japanese propaganda squads hastily to splash white A.A.F. stars on the crashed Japanese fighters and pass them off as American planes. As the P-40's pulled away to go home, they sighted a formation of Nicks coming up from Hong Kong where they had evidently been waiting for the C.A.T.F.

November 28 we finished the sweep with another strike at shipping in the Gulf of Tonkin and then returned to Kunming. In six days the C.A.T.F. had flown 11 missions, hitting targets 800 miles apart, without a loss. The bill came to—71 Jap aircraft destroyed; 3 ocean-going ships sunk; and damage to docks, coal piles, supply depots, and airdrome installations. It was a striking demonstration of what could be done in China with a few airplanes, a little gas, some bombs, and determined air crews.

At the end of November C.A.T.F. headquarters moved from one set of tile-roofed mud huts at Peishiyi to another set of tile-roofed mud huts on the edge of the airfield at Kunming. I was loath to move. My attempts at persuading the Generalissimo to begin an offensive against Ichang, the most advanced Japanese stronghold on the Yangtze, were beginning to show signs of promise. Chinese capture of Ichang would have given the C.A.T.F. an ideal base for continual pounding of Hankow, always the key to Japanese operations in central China. However, Bissell was working hard to disrupt all my ties with the Chinese and insisted the C.A.T.F. headquarters move as far as possible from the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang.

December was a dismal month. Good fighting weather ended in East China, and lack of supplies kept the C.A.T.F. grounded in the west. I was continually sick with acute bronchitis and influenza and only the able ministrations of my friend and personal physician, Colonel Tom Gentry, kept me going without long periods in bed. Dust

from our earthen-floored mud offices, combined with poor lighting and drafts through oilcloth windows kept most of our headquarters personnel red eyed and sniffing during the entire winter.

Friction between C.A.T.F. and Tenth Air Force Headquarters in Delhi chafed on many sore spots. As early as September I wrote to Stilwell that the chain of command that forced me to deal with the Chinese through Bissell's headquarters in India, as well as Stilwell's headquarters in Chungking, was "unwieldly, illogical, and unnecessary" in addition to being a direct violation of Stilwell's earlier promise to the Generalissimo that the chain of command would run directly from the Chinese through Stilwell to me and that I would command all American air units in China.

Under Stilwell's organization of the China-Burma-India Theater, Bissell actually commanded all American air units in China. My status was simply that of deputy commander, subject at all times to Bissell's orders. Bissell was a cold, meticulous man with a filing-cabinet mind, who sought to cover his inability to cope with people by refuge in strict adherence to Army regulations. He carried his military fetish for parade-ground discipline and the spit and polish of garrison life into a situation where combat results were the only real measure of success. I always felt that Bissell prized a snappy salute from a perfectly uniformed staff officer more than a Japanese plane shot down in flames. As Bissell's subordinate, I obeyed his orders to the letter, but I never developed much respect for his ability, either as a military administrator or tactician.

During that winter the radio between Delhi and Kunming crackled steadily with an exchange of terse, bitter "eyes alone" messages between Bissell and myself. Many of these exchanges were over apparent trivia. But maintaining morale of the Americans who were fighting in China with inadequate equipment and short supply of everything involved much apparent trivia. Our morale problem during long periods of inactivity forced by lack of supplies was terrific. I never ceased to be amazed at how pilots and ground crews survived these intervals of bitter boredom and always managed to produce so well in the pinches.

Mail, soap, warm clothes, razor blades, cigarettes, promotions, and decorations for combat valor were among the simplest things needed to bolster morale. On all of these points Bissell failed the C.A.T.F. without good reason. Post-exchange supplies went undelivered for two to three months at a time leaving the entire C.A.T.F. without a whole bar of soap, razor blades, or cigarettes. Everybody knew that

our precious DC-3 transports were regularly requisitioned by theater headquarters in Chungking to deliver a monthly five-ton load of American canned food, beer, cigarettes, and auto gas. For the privilege of eating in this theater mess stocked with stateside food, Stilwell's staff officers collected an extra seven dollars a day in their pay. During one stretch of bad weather when morale sagged dangerously low due to the lack of mail for three weeks, I sent a DC-3 over the Hump with orders to return loaded with mail sacks. When it returned jammed with tennis shoes for the Chinese Army, I thought the profanity around our alert shacks was justified. Woolen clothes requisitioned from India during the summer failed to arrive in China long after winter winds were whipping across the Yunnan plateau. To keep from freezing, my men bought rough horsehide jackets and fur hats in Kunming markets. Patched pants became the real insignia of the C.A.T.F. Bissell continually complained about the nonregulation garb of my men.

Promotions were stymied for six months before Bissell produced the officially approved table of organization without which, he had assured the Generalissimo, no U.S. Army unit could operate. Bissell consistently turned down C.A.T.F. decorations for gallantry in action on the ground that the incidents cited were merely "in line of duty." He rejected a posthumous Silver Star, a high combat decoration, for Captain P. B. O'Connell, who pressed a dive-bombing attack over Hong Kong harbor to sink a tanker in the face of enemy fighter attacks that cost him his life. Yet Bissell needled me to recommend Tenth Air Force B-24 pilots for the Silver Star because they bombed Linsi coal mines in North China without enemy opposition. Bissell also turned down an Air Medal for Major Elmer Richardson, who led the volunteer night mission of P-40's to dive-bomb the Hankow docks in the face of the heaviest flak and searchlight defenses in China.

Bissell bluntly informed me that he, sitting in Delhi, was a better judge of a C.A.T.F. fighter pilot's condition than I was, and he forced A.V.G. veterans "Tex" Hill and Ed Rector to stay in China an extra month after they were both ill with malaria and dysentery and had been in continuous combat for a year.

As a result of all this, Bissell was not the most popular man in China. C.A.T.F. fighter pilots sitting on clay revetments outside alert shacks whiled away long hours between fights, dreaming up elaborate insults to Tenth Air Force staff officers living on "Per Diem" Hill in Delhi. Their choice barbs were naturally reserved for Bissell. At Kunming they taught Chinese coolies who carried cargo and passen-

gers' baggage from transports to greet new arrivals with what can be politely translated as "nuts to Bissell." This, the fighter boys assured the coolies, was a standard American greeting. The coolies, pleased with their knowledge, religiously greeted each transport with a resounding chorus of "nuts to Bissell." This was great sport for the browned-off fighter boys until one day when General Bissell stepped off a transport at Kunming and was greeted by the grinning coolies shouting "nuts to Bissell." He was not amused.

More serious than any of these matters was the complete failure of the Stilwell-Bissell regime to meet their supply quotas for the C.A.T.F. In September both Stilwell and Bissell approved a plan for increasing the C.A.T.F. to a strength of 105 fighters, 12 bombers, and 4 photo planes and providing replacements to keep it at that strength. They also agreed to provide the C.A.T.F. with a monthly tonnage of 1,986 tons delivered by air over the Hump from India. They never even came close to fulfilling any of these firm commitments. By January of 1943 the C.A.T.F. was getting only 300 tons a month over the Hump. In February we got 400 tons. In March out of a total allocation of 1,000 tons only 615 were delivered. At the beginning of each month a collection of Tenth Air Force and C.B.I. Theater officers solemnly drew up a schedule of guaranteed Hump deliveries. Just as regularly at the end of each month, C.A.T.F. records showed receipts of from 30 to 50 per cent of the supplies promised.

This early failure of the Hump was not due primarily to the technical problems of the aerial supply line but to the contempt of Bissell and Stilwell for this method of supply. Stilwell's ignorance of the air-lift potential was understandable but why Bissell, an airman, persisted in labeling the Hump operation as impractical I was never able to comprehend. Bissell stoutly maintained that to deliver 5,000 tons a month to Kunming from India required a fleet of 300 transports and 25 airfields. Less than a year after his fantastic estimate the Air Transport Command was delivering 10,000 tons a month to Kunming using 150 transports and half a dozen fields.

Having written off the Hump in advance as a failure, Bissell made no attempt to develop its potential. He allowed Stilwell to accept a reduction in Hump transport planes from 100 to 25 without a protest. The job of building Hump terminals in the Assam Valley of India was turned over to British tea planters with the result that when the monsoon rains came only one of the six fields was above water. During much of the time the Hump operations were directed by Bissell, planes of C.N.A.C. delivered more tonnage to China than

the Army transports. Stilwell further indicated his indifference to the Hump by later transferring eight aviation engineer regiments, sent to build all-weather airfields in Assam, to work on his Ledo Road project.

Stilwell was already preoccupied with his campaign to walk back into Burma and was interested in China only as a source of troops for that venture. He had established a training center at Ramgarh, India, to re-equip remnants of the Chinese divisions that escaped from Burma and had a plan for an offensive into northern Burma to coincide with a Chinese attack from Yunnan on the Salween front. Stilwell spent most of the winter attempting to dragoon the Generalissimo into giving him the green light for this foolhardy venture. At that time the Ramgarh divisions were not ready; the Chinese armies in Yunnan were neither trained nor equipped; the Stilwell Road in Burma had not been built, and the Burma Road in Yunnan east of the Salween had not been repaired for use on the Salween front; neither the Tenth Air Force in India nor the C.A.T.F. in China had sufficient planes, gas, or radio equipment to provide close air support for the campaign. Nevertheless the C.A.T.F. was ordered by Stilwell to remain on the alert for the Burma offensive throughout the winter of 1942-43.

Occupied with these problems, Stilwell was indifferent to the achievements and problems of the C.A.T.F. except for occasional reminders to me that "the men in the trenches" really won wars. During the entire time he commanded the C.B.I. Stilwell never once sought my advice on aviation matters. What plans I submitted to him for my operations were perfunctorily approved but never implemented.

My only two contacts with Stilwell during the C.A.T.F. period were typical of the relations between us. Early in the fall I received an urgent summons to meet Stilwell in Chungking. Expecting a conference on strategy, logistics, or other important matters, I gathered all available data and flew to Chungking.

When I reported to Stilwell he thrust a voluminous document at me and grunted, "What do you know about this?"

It was a petition requesting that I be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, signed by every man and officer in the C.A.T.F. I assured Stilwell it was a surprise to me, but his eyes smoldered with disbelief. His main complaint was that the request had not been put through proper military channels. That was all he wanted to discuss. I flew back to Kunming with my brief case unopened.

The other conference was occasioned by his order of January 20,

1943, cutting gas deliveries to the C.A.T.F. by 50 per cent. We had been receiving 1,400 gallons a day over the Hump. A 50-per-cent cut to 700 gallons a day meant barely enough gas to taxi planes to and from their dispersal areas and to run up the engines each morning. I flew to Chungking to argue the case in person.

Stilwell listened to my report. When I finished he peered at me through his steel-rimmed spectacles and said, "Chennault, you must realize that the air force can't have everything. You've got to learn to do without things."

I requested him to put the order in writing and walked out to radio Bissell that the C.A.T.F. would be grounded as soon as Stilwell's order became effective. Bissell replied directing me to find some way to carry on. I retorted that if he knew of an acceptable substitute for aviation gas please to inform me.

Stilwell never issued his written order, and the cut was not enforced. Later I discovered it was Stilwell's intention to effect a hasty stock-piling of supplies for the Yunnan armies to begin their Salween offensive. This was his plan despite the fact that total Hump tonnage barely netted 1,000 tons a month.

After the great November turkey shoot over Canton, C.A.T.F. combat activity dwindled to a few scattered sorties. Our fighter squadrons were redeployed at Kunming, Chanyi, and Yunnanyi to cover the Hump terminals during the clear winter when we expected the Japs to attempt more action against the Hump supply line. In December we caught one enemy air group on the ground at Hanoi, as it staged on its way to Burma, and destroyed ten bombers and six fighters. The B-25's based at Kunming began punching at the Japanese supply dumps on the Salween front. On Christmas Day the Japs hit Yunnanyi without warning. The next day they tried it again but were intercepted by four P-40's over the Mekong River and lost five bombers and three fighters in a running fight back to Burma. At the end of that fight Yunnanyi was out of gas. For the rest of the winter we were hard pressed to supply enough gas there to keep the radio-station generator operating. At Kunming gas supplies were so low that I prohibited all buzzing and victory rolls after combat missions. We managed a few strafing missions to Burma in January. Then for thirty-three days the C.A.T.F. remained grounded due to lack of gas.

On March 10, 1943, with a radio from Washington announcing formation of the Fourteenth U.S. Air Force in China under my command, the C.A.T.F. passed into history with its planes still grounded



for lack of gas and its personnel buddled around charcoal stoves all over Yunnan, still cursing Delhi for the lack of supplies.

Despite its grim beginning and starvation diet the China Air Task Force left a proud combat record. In nine months it had destroyed 149 enemy planes in the air and probably destroyed 85 more with a loss of 16 P-40's. In 65 bombing missions Japanese fighters had been able to penetrate our fighter cover only once to shoot down a single B-25. We had dropped 314 tons of bombs, less than one quarter of the weight of a single Eighth Air Force mission over Germany, but those bombs had shattered the security of the Japanese in their vast base on the Asiatic mainland. Most important, the C.A.T.F. had proved that even a small air force operating on a semi-starvation diet of supplies could hold its own against the Japanese Air Force in China. During that grim period the C.A.T.F. was the only tangible evidence of American aid and American offensive spirit to millions of Chinese, whose courage and determination to continue the war had reached its lowest ebb.

The C.A.T.F. was probably the smallest American air force ever to be dignified by the command of a general. It certainly was the raggedest. Its paper work was poor, and salutes were scarce, but when the signals were called for combat, it never missed a play.

CHINESE anger and despair over Allied neglect of the war against Japan crystallized during the winter of 1942-43 into a desperate program of pressure to stir the United States into a more active and understanding role in Asia. This program, which saw the late Wendell Willkie speak out boldly for China and Madame Chiang Kai-shek carry her case personally to the White House and a joint session of Congress, gave me my first and only opportunity to present plans for a China air offensive to the highest Allied military councils and to debate these issues face to face with Stilwell. These debates took place at the Trident Conference held by President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and the Combined Anglo-American Chiefs of Staff in Washington during May 1943. Main purpose of Trident was to set the time and place of the European invasion. Its secondary task was to formulate for the first time an Allied policy for the war in Asia.

This policy was long overdue. During the year that preceded the Trident Conference, there were profound changes in China's internal and military position as a result of Allied defeats in Asia. The Generalissimo's strategy of trading space for time lost its point with the fall of Burma. China ran out of space, and the time gained expired without any decisive action by her Allies. Britain and the United States refused for over a year to collaborate on any new military plans for Asia. Cut off by the Japanese on land and sea and being fed with difficulty through the aerial umbilical across the Hump, China could no longer survive on a stalemate. Without effective aid and decisive action, China grew weaker by the day. Time, so long China's staunch ally, now went to work for the Japanese.

Japan's grip on Asiatic land and sea communications squeezed China in an economic strangle hold. Cumulative effects of the blockade after five years of war-disrupted economy touched off an inflationary spiral that was still soaring to fantastic heights two years after

V-J day. From a prewar exchange of 3 Chinese dollars to 1 American dollar, the black-market rate hit 80 to 1 by the end of 1943, 3,000 to 1 by V-J day, 12,000 to 1 in 1947, and 600,000 to 1 by early 1948.

Farmers of mountainous West China were unable to produce enough food for Free China's war-swollen population. Famine was always present in varying degrees. Food shortages were increased by widespread hoarding and black-market trading, both caused by the runaway currency market. When I made an inspection of East China air bases in February 1943, local crop failures had already reduced the people to eating bark, rice straw, and weeds with the worst famines still to come.

Public officials with income tied to government-pegged salaries watched their pay melt under inflation and faced the dubious alternatives of starvation or eking out a living by any means. Corruption leaked out of the disjointed economic system like sewage from a broken main.

Chinese armies steadily deteriorated under long inactivity, malnutrition, and disease. Even the best-equipped troops could barely scrape together enough food, arms, and ammunition for a single brief engagement. Two armies were holding the Salween front with only 12 French 75-mm. field guns of 1907 vintage. All the artillery in East China totaled 60 pieces of four different nationalities. Lack of transportation and a central supply system forced troops to live off the land, where they became an intolerable burden to an already underfed population. First serious internal disorders in Free China resulted from fierce competition for local food supplies between farmers and troops. On the stalemated Salween front entire regiments were decimated by malaria and cholera. Under these conditions the best Chinese troops lost their fighting edge. The worst disintegrated into predatory mobs.

Black markets, profiteering, financial racketeering, and the general stink of corruption thrived in the atmosphere of poverty, suspicion, and despair that hung like a gray pall over the rice paddies and mountains of Free China during the leanest war years.

Japanese policy was shrewdly geared to exploit the dry rot eating away at Free China's vitals. Waning prestige of the United States and Great Britain was combined with a reversal of Japanese policy toward the Chinese. Instead of a bayonet point, the Japanese extended a conciliatory hand. Brutality was replaced by a veneer of studied politeness. Japanese propaganda hammered on its most potentially potent theme—"Asia for the Asiatics—an end to the white man's rule."

The Japanese did their best to convince the Chinese they had no hope in an Anglo-American-dominated world. Recruiting of Chinese puppet troops increased ominously. For the first time the Japanese felt sufficiently confident to use them in combat. Harsh laws against smuggling were relaxed to permit Japanese-manufactured goods to flow into the border areas of Free China and link their people to the Japanese economy. Brisk trade in wolfram, mercury, copper, tung oil, and rice, all exchanged for Japanese goods, flowed between occupied and unoccupied China.

There were increasing signs of Japanese military activity around Ichang that indicated an offensive to by-pass the Yangtze gorges and drive for Chungking. Almost until V-J day the Japanese dreamed of knocking China out of the war and fulfilling their long-sought goal of a continental empire in Asia. As late as the spring of 1945 they were still hurling offensives against the Chinese in an effort to bring the shaky Central Government tumbling down.

Combination of Japanese pressure and Allied indifference had a marked effect on the character of the Central Government. The Kuomintang ran a single-party rule of China for more than 18 years, but it was by no means a politically homogeneous organization. Shades of political opinion within the Kuomintang are as wide as those separating Southern senators from the C.I.O. in the Democratic party. The Kuomintang entered the war with what, for China, was a mildly liberal tinge but there was always a bitter struggle for power between the modernists and the traditionalists. Modernists were largely American educated, spoke fluent English, and believed China's future lay in long-time friendly relations with the United States. They were the people who pushed education, technical development, and political reform hardest within China. The traditionalists belonged to the old school of Chinese politics and stood firmly for nepotism, absolute authority of the government, and the use of public office as a means of increasing personal wealth and power. They were intensely anti-foreign and one element within this group had long favored an agreement with Japan to unite against the Western powers.

The fate of the modernist element in the Kuomintang was largely dependent on American policy toward China. Its leaders were the bridge between the United States and China, and their position in the Kuomintang was based on their effectiveness in getting aid for China. When lend-lease was extended to China, loans extended, and the American Volunteer Group organized, their prestige was high. When the United States failed to make good its promises and the

Stilwell-Bissell policy shortstopped the bulk of American supplies in India, influence of the modernists diminished almost to the vanishing point. The failure of U.S. policy strongly to support this element of the Kuomintang is one of the more tragic aspects of our muddling in China. The need for American supplies to maintain their position within China forced the modernists into sharp conflict with the Stilwell policy of earmarking American lend-lease to China for his Burma rathole. When the Kuomintang modernists neared success in their campaign for Stilwell's removal from China in October 1943, he did not hesitate to conclude an alliance with the most reactionary elements in the Kuomintang to preserve his own job and help oust his Chinese critics. Stilwell's subsequent demands for sweeping economic and military reform in China were made long after the modernists had been purged from both the Chinese Army and government as a result of his alliance with the Kuomintang traditionalists.

Before I left China for Washington in the spring of 1943, the Generalissimo informed me that Chinese national morale was at its lowest ebb since the beginning of the war. He warned that only an immediate plan for decisive military action within China could stem the ebbing tide of Chinese resistance.

Stilwell tried unsuccessfully to dam the rising tide of criticism against his command in the China-Burma-India Theater. Since his return to Chungking from the Burma debacle, Stilwell had prepared no plans for Allied military action in China other than replacement of the A.V.G. by the C.A.T.F. His only thought was for a speedy, triumphal return to Burma, and his efforts were devoted exclusively to prying more Chinese troops from the Generalissimo for that venture.

As early as August 13, 1942, I tried to impress on Stilwell the urgent need for action in China by the following radio:

Situation in Orient appears extremely critical stop Unrest India stop Jap threat to our transport service from Burma stop Determined opposition to MacArthur's offensive in islands and Chinese inactivity due to our failure deliver requested air support and lend-lease supplies all contain elements gravest danger to American war effort stop

Axis continues victorious on all fronts while Allies have failed to launch successful offensive anywhere stop Action of a small effective US air force in China would do much to relieve that situation stop It could destroy much of the war materials flowing through and around Formosa to southern islands for use against MacArthur stop Inspire Chinese ground forces to action against

Japanese occupied areas stop Neutralize Jap air efforts in Burma and Indo-China stop Relieve immediate Jap threat to India stop Safeguard our air transport line to China and supply a successful offensive to inspire all Allied powers stop

I have demonstrated practicability employment of force for more than two months with handful planes stop If total 500 planes bombers and fighters plus 100 transports given me plus complete authority in this theater I will accept full responsibility for attainment of objectives listed stop

Nowhere else in world can one US plane destroy from 8 to 10 enemy planes while damaging so much other enemy operations at same time stop To do this I require number planes mentioned above delivered in increments echeloned over five months stop Due to extreme gravity situation immediate action necessary stop

Urge this radio be forwarded Generals Marshall and Arnold for decision and necessary action.

It was easy for Stilwell to pigeonhole messages such as this. The pocket veto was one of his favorite methods. Stilwell's control of military censorship in the C.B.I. enabled him to plug other possible leaks.

It was at this time that an order was issued prohibiting C.A.T.F. headquarters from releasing any information concerning air operations. All press releases were to be released from Stilwell's theater headquarters, either Chungking or New Delhi. This not only involved a delay of one to three days but permitted Stilwell's aides to word and color the releases as desired for their purposes.

By highly publicizing C.A.T.F. raids on Hankow, Hong Kong, Canton, Hanoi, and Burma as exploits of "his planes," Stilwell managed to create the illusion that a much larger air force was operating in China. All references to the C.A.T.F.'s pitiful size were carefully censored. The Japanese were willing to preserve this fiction of a large U.S. air force in China to cover their own consistent defeats, but they were well aware of the real size of our forces. Only the American people were kept in the dark.

The War Department, from General Marshall down, naturally received no information except from Stilwell. Thus Stilwell's distinctly distorted version of the Chinese situation became the official version. And, as in all such cases, dissenters felt the full weight of official wrath. Colonel Merian Cooper, then my chief of staff, wrote a personal letter to Major General "Wild Bill" Donovan, chief of the Office of Strategic Services and an intimate of President Roosevelt's, describing China's plight. When Donovan circulated the letter around Washington, the

War Department began immediate action to transfer Cooper from China "for medical reasons."

The worst breach of Stilwell's carefully constructed dam of censorship occurred when Wendell Willkie stopped in China on his round-the-world trip as President Roosevelt's personal envoy. Willkie made a tremendous impression on the Chinese. His shaggy bulk and joviality fitted him into the Chinese concept of an important American, and he talked to the Chinese in realistic terms they understood--of the need for expanding transportation, developing their natural resources, and improving food production.

During his stay in Chungking, Willkie phoned C.A.T.F. headquarters, then at Peishiyi, with a request to visit and chat confidentially with me. I told Willkie I could not see him until he secured Stilwell's approval. The next day, October 11, 1942, Willkie and Stilwell drove to Peishiyi in Stilwell's staff car. Stilwell said I had his permission to tell Willkie anything I chose. While Willkie and I talked for two hours, Stilwell sat in the outer office and waited.

When Willkie found out our highly publicized C.A.T.F. raids were being made with less than a dozen bombers and we were defending all China with fifty fighters, he was genuinely shocked. From the geographical scope of our operations and our eight-to-one record of enemy planes destroyed he, like so many other Americans, concluded we were a substantial and well-supplied force. Willkie asked me to state my case in a detailed letter that he could present directly to President Roosevelt. I stayed up most of that night with Colonel Cooper, writing, and dispatched the letter to Chengtu by air courier, catching Willkie there before he took off for Siberia and Alaska. I quote it in full.

October 8, 1942.

MR. WENDELL WILLKIE,  
SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT  
IN HIS CAPACITY AS COMMANDER IN CHIEF  
OF THE ARMED FORCES.

You have stated to me that you are the direct representative in a military, as well as a political sense, of the Commander in Chief of the United States Army, the President of the United States. You have ordered me to make a report directly to you on military operations in China against Japan. I herewith comply.

1. Japan can be defeated in China.

2. It can be defeated by an Air Force so small that in other theaters it would be called ridiculous.

3. I am confident that, given real authority in command of such an Air Force, I can cause the collapse of Japan. I believe I can do it in such a manner that the lives of hundreds of thousands of American soldiers and sailors will be saved, and that the cost to our country will be relatively small.

4. I speak with confidence, but, I believe, not with egotism. The reason for my confidence is based on the fact that since 1923 I have believed firmly in the possibility of Japan making war on the United States; I have devoted the best years of my military life to the study of this subject; I have for five years been unofficial adviser to the Chinese Air Force; in this capacity, I made war against Japan for over five years; for the last year I have commanded first the A.V.G., then the China Air Task Force; at no time in China have I had as many as fifty fighting planes in operation to meet the full fighting air force of Japan; as Commander of the A.V.G. and the China Air Task Force, I have never lost an air battle against the Japanese. This tiny fighter force under my Command has destroyed over three hundred Japanese aircraft confirmed and about three hundred more probably destroyed—I believe the total to be about six hundred—with the loss of twelve A.V.G. pilots and Four China Air Task Force pilots from enemy action. The bomber force of the China Air Task Force has consisted at maximum of eight medium bombers. With these I have made twenty-five raids against Japanese installations, troops, and shipping, without the loss of either a man or plane through enemy action.

5. When I came to China the Chinese Air Force was under Italian advisers. Before America entered the war I had succeeded (because I believed we would fight the Axis powers and Japan), in having the Italians sent out of China. I believe I have the full confidence of the Generalissimo and all high Chinese leaders. If I have their confidence it is because (a) I have been a winning general, (b) I have never lied to the Chinese, and I have never promised to perform more than I believed capable of performance.

6. I am now confident that given full authority as the American military commander in China that I can not only bring about the downfall of Japan but that I can make the Chinese lasting friends with the United States. I am confident that I can create such good will that China will be a great and friendly trade market for generations.

7. The military task is a simple one. It has been complicated by unwieldy, illogical military organization and by men who do not understand aerial warfare in China.



8. To accomplish the downfall of Japan, I need only this very small American Air Force—105 fighter aircraft of modern design, 30 medium bombers, and in the last phase, some months from now, 12 heavy bombers. The force must be constantly maintained at all times. We will have losses. These losses must be replaced. I consider 30 per cent replacements in fighters and 20 per cent in bombers sufficient.

9. My reason for stating that I can accomplish the overthrow of Japan is that I am confident this force can destroy the effectiveness of the Japanese Air Force, probably within six months, within one year at the outside. I am a professional fighter and this is my professional opinion. The facts on which this opinion is based are simple. Japan has only a limited production of aircraft. I can force that Japanese Air Force by aerial military maneuver to fight me in a position of my own selection. Having once fixed it in this position I can destroy its effectiveness. With its basic effective Air Force destroyed, our Navy can operate with freedom, and General MacArthur can push his offensive in the South West Pacific at will. Meanwhile, from the Eastern Chinese Air Bases, I will guarantee to destroy the principal industrial centers of Japan. No country is so peculiarly vulnerable to air attack. The cutting of the Japanese sea route to her newly conquered empire is a simple matter. Once the above two objectives are accomplished the complete military subjection of Japan is certain and easy.

10. To effectively maintain the small air force mentioned above, an aerial supply line must be built up between India and China. It is a simple statement of fact to say this aerial supply line will also be minute compared to the objectives to be accomplished. The full establishment and maintenance of this aerial ferry route is child's play in comparison with the difficulties overcome in establishing the Pan American South American air line or its Atlantic and Pacific air lines. It only needs good command—good management. The amount of freight to be carried over this air line in order to maintain an air force is very small—the accompanying study will state the basic simplicity.

11. The present plan for the defense of this ferry line is that of the standard orthodox, rigid military mind. It has no real military value. It shows complete lack of conception of the true use of air power or even of basic military strategy. I would defend this air line in the same way that Scipio Africanus defended Rome, when Hannibal was at its very gates. Scipio struck at Carthage, and the Carthaginians, by necessity, had to call Hannibal and his Army back to Africa to defend Carthage. In like manner, I would defend the ferry route by striking at the Japanese supply lines to the South-

west Pacific, and then hit Tokyo itself. The Japanese Air Force by necessity would then be forced to fight in Eastern China and over Tokyo. The Japanese have not the air power to fight both over the ferry route in India, Burma and Yunnan, and over Tokyo at the same time. No capable commander in history has ever adopted the stolid plan of the present method of defending the ferry route. Grant ordered Sherman to march through the heart of the South and destroy Lee's supplies and cut Lee's lines of communications while, he, Grant, fixed Lee's Army in northern Virginia. Once Lee's supplies and lines of communications were cut, Lee was defeated and the Confederacy was ruined. I plan to do the same thing in China against Japan with air power. Japan must hold Hong Kong, Shanghai, and the Yangtze Valley. These are essential to hold Japan itself. I can force the Japanese Air Force to fight in the defense of these objectives behind the best air warning net of its kind in the world. With the use of these tactics, I am confident that I can destroy Japanese aircraft at the rate of between ten and twenty to one. When the Japanese Air Force refuses to come within my warning net and fight, I will strike out with my medium bombers against their sea supply line to the Southwest Pacific. In a few months the enemy will lose so many aircraft that the aerial defense of Japan will be negligible. I can then strike at Japan from Chuchow[Chuhsien] and Lishui with heavy bombers. My air force can burn up Japan's two main industrial areas—Tokyo and the Kobe, Osaka, Nagoya triangle—and Japan will be unable to supply her armies in her newly conquered empire in China, Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, etc. with munitions of war. The road is then open for the Chinese Army in China, for the American Navy in the Pacific and for MacArthur to advance from his Australian stronghold—all with comparatively slight cost.

12. While engaged in these operations, I will maintain full ground installations for the eastern terminus of the ferry route in Yunnan, at Kunming, Chanyi, Yunnanyi, etc. If a really major swift aerial movement is made by the Japanese across their staging route into Burma, to attack the India-China air supply lines, then, acting on interior lines of air communications, I can move back and again be within the warning net which I have established in Yunnan, and meet the Japanese over their Burma airfields and then and there destroy whatever force they have sent against us.

My entire above plan is simple. It has been long thought out. I have spent five years developing an air warning net and radio command service to fight this way. I have no doubt of my success.

13. However, in order to accomplish this aim, it is essential that I be given complete freedom of fighting action, that I also be able

to deal directly with the Generalissimo and the Chinese forces. This latter I know the Generalissimo desires. I would not make the above statements so confidently if I had not, in my operations with the A.V.G., never retreated one foot until the ground forces had fled behind me, leaving my air bases exposed to ground attack. Only then did I retreat to again destroy twenty Japanese planes for each one of the A.V.G. lost. Even then I would not have been forced to retreat if I had had the necessary bombers and reconnaissance planes.

Given authority to report only to the Generalissimo, I intend to carry out in China this combined ground and air action.

14. This plan I again repeat will enable the Chinese ground forces to operate successfully, and most assuredly will permit MacArthur to successfully advance and will decisively aid the Navy's operations in the Pacific. Moreover, it will make China our lasting friend for years after the war.

C. L. CHIENNAULT  
BRIGADIER GENERAL, A.U.S.  
COMMANDING.

Willkie delivered the letter to the President. He in turn forwarded it to the War Department, where it created a major scandal.

Through the person of Dr. Soong and cables from the Generalissimo the Chinese had been keeping up a steady drumfire on the White House for more aid. The original Roosevelt-Churchill decision of December 1941 to give top priority to the European War had been accepted by the Chinese with fairly good grace. But when the Casablanca Conference in January 1943 indicated that action in Asia was so remote that top planners did not even include it on the agenda, the Chinese let out an anguished wail that carried clear to Morocco. Generals "Hap" Arnold and Brehon Somervell were dispatched from Casablanca to Chungking to soothe the Generalissimo with more promises. The Generalissimo bluntly demanded an air force of 500 planes under separate American command in China and a 10,000-ton monthly Hump lift to support them. Arnold promised to see what he could do. The Chinese were then well past the promise stage.

On March 3, 1943, I received word of my promotion to major general. Seven days later the Fourteenth Air Force was activated in China, and my command was separated from that of Bissell's. In mid-March a four-engine Liberator (B-24) bomber group arrived in India for assignment to the Fourteenth. On March 27, Brigadier General Edgar E. "Buzz" Glenn arrived to become my chief of staff.

He brought the first sizable contingent of staff officers to reach China since the war began. Glenn also brought orders from Arnold to Stilwell stating that, at President Roosevelt's request, control of the Hump transport operations was to be transferred from Bissell to me. The President had refrained from issuing an executive order on the transfer only after Arnold's assurance that it would be made. This was the best news of all since bitter experience had proved that a field commander who has no control over his supply lines is in a dangerous predicament. Glenn transmitted these orders in writing to Stilwell, who, as was his wont when unpleasant facts were forcibly called to his attention, promptly filed them and forgot. Stilwell never executed the President's order. The Hump route remained under Bissell.

At the end of March, President Roosevelt cabled the Generalissimo that new airplanes would be sent to China just as fast as assurances were received from me that supplies and facilities were available for them to fight.

To balance these windfalls we suffered a complete breakdown in Hump supply that forced the Fourteenth to suspend all operations early in April. Still staggering along without any firm priority on Hump tonnage, our requirements for March were the 1,986 tons approved by Stilwell and Bissell the previous September. When Stilwell's ground forces and the Service of Supply got through, we had only 1,000 tons allocated for March. Of this total only 625 were actually delivered. Monsoon rains that deluged Assam in early April, a month earlier than usual, indicated the shoddiness of Bissell's airfield preparations on his end of the Hump. All but one of the six airfields constructed under his regime became a quagmire, useless for operations. Colonel Alexander who had taken over as first Air Transport Command boss of the Hump in December 1942 was forced to operate all his transports and the 308th Heavy Bomb Group off the single hard-surfaced runway at Chabua—the only such runway in the entire Assam Valley. Hump operations slowed to a trickle. Of the 245 tons scheduled for delivery to the Fourteenth during the first 10 days of April, only 45 tons reached China. I had no alternative but to suspend all combat operations until the supply situation improved.

We were still busy shaking down the new staff officers and teaching them Asiatic geography on April 20 when I received a radio from Stilwell in Chungking announcing his arrival at Kunming at 5 P.M. I drove down to the field to meet him.

As he stepped from the plane he looked at me in amazement. "Where are your bags? Aren't you ready to go?" he growled.

"Go where?" I countered.

We glared at each other silently for a moment. Then Stilwell beckoned me to follow him around behind the airplane's tail fin, out of earshot of the other officers present. I finally convinced Stilwell that I had not the slightest idea of where he was bound. Then he explained that we had been summoned to Washington and intimated that he suspected it was the result of my finagling behind his back. He was leaving for India immediately and expected me to accompany him.

I was taken completely by surprise. I got permission to confer with the Generalissimo in Chungking and agreed to meet Stilwell in Karachi in two days. I flew to Chungking early the next morning, but the Generalissimo was no help. He told me to present China's need for decisive military action, American supplies, and an air force free from Delhi control. I told him we already had a separate air force and most of the things we needed at the moment except actual delivery of supplies. I flew back to Kunming the same afternoon and kept my appointment with Stilwell in Karachi the next day, having flown 2,800 miles in two days. While flying over the Assam Valley, I got a good look at the airfields Bissell had built, glistening under inches of water.

Stilwell had a C-87 waiting in Karachi for the long flight to Washington. On leaving the Generalissimo in Chungking, I had no detailed written plan for China air strategy. Perhaps I had better have one by the time we landed in Washington. As our converted Liberator transport droned across Africa, the Atlantic, and South America I worked out my plan, setting it down in longhand on note paper with a fountain pen that leaked at high altitudes. A brief case spread across my knee served as a desk. Many times Stilwell squinted dourly through his steel-rimmed glasses at me, but I was too busy to worry what his plans might be. By the time we reached Washington the draft was completed. I located Joe Alsop, then working for China Defense Supplies, and had him type copies of the plan. Two days later it was thrown into the hopper of the Trident Conference and eventually formed the basis for the rousing vote of confidence given me by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill.

Soon after arriving in Washington I picked up Lieutenant Colonel Harold "Butch" Morgan, a recent arrival, who had been a mainstay of the 11th Bomb Squadron in China, and pressed him into service as an aide. "Butch" gave me the only staff help I got during that month of conferences. When the top secret sessions began, "Butch"

was barred at the door, leaving me to participate without an aide. We made a ragged-looking pair among the resplendent military finery of the Pentagon. I was one of the A.V.G.'s who had been inducted into the Army without a uniform. The best I could muster was a prewar olive-drab tunic, a gray wool shirt, and a black tie, both nonregulation. "Butch" had been in the C.A.T.F. so long he owned only well-patched chino pants. We shared an office with Stilwell, whose party was larger than my entire China headquarters. The contrast was terrific. On one side sat Stilwell and his aides in freshly pressed Palm Beach tan summer uniforms glittering with a fruit salad of ribbons. Across the room were the ragged representatives of the Fourteenth.

While we were still flying over Africa, the Japanese had sneaked in on Yunnanyi and caught Fourteenth Air Force fighters on the ground. More than 200 Chinese coolies working on the runway and 2 Americans were killed; 5 P-40's and a C-47 were burned, and 11 P-40's damaged. It was one of those heartbreaking incidents caused by our lack of supplies. The Japs had been coming for several days previously and then turning back after our fighters took the air. The squadron commander knew his gas would soon be exhausted by those tactics. On the third day he decided to wait for one final net report from the Mekong River station before taking off. That station failed to report, and the Japs came in unchallenged.

On the day I landed in Washington they tried a follow-up against Kunming for an Emperor's-birthday communiqué on April 29. Again the fighters failed to make contact before the bombing. My new operations officer, Colonel Don Lyon, and a B-25 pilot were killed; General Glenn was wounded and our motor transport pool smashed by the bombs. I was ready to head back for China an hour after I received Glenn's radios describing the bombings. Instead I spent more than a month in a seemingly endless round of conferences, dinners, cocktail parties, speeches, sitting for portraits and a bust, and turning down a dozen authors who wanted to write the story of my life. My appointment book was studded with interesting names: President Roosevelt; Prime Minister Churchill; General Marshall; Manuel Quezon, president of the Philippines; Harry Hopkins; Sir John Dill; Grover Loening; Donald Nelson; Leland Stowe; Dr. Soong; Burdette Wright; Walter Lippmann; Bill Bullitt; Felix Frankfurter; Joseph Grew; Colonel Frank Knox; James V. Forrestal; Bernard Baruch; Henry Morgenthau, Jr.; Henry Stimson; and a galaxy of Allied military brass. A general home from the wars could have quite a glittering social life in Washington in the spring of 1943. My only satisfaction stemmed from the fact that

I had left Washington two years before a retired captain and returned a major general. The deference with which some of my old opponents in the Pentagon now treated me was amusing.

The issue of the Asiatic portions of the Trident Conference was clearly drawn. The British were simply not interested in any Asiatic action until they felt strong enough to go after Singapore in earnest. They suffered from the same psychological guilt complex regarding Singapore that seemed to be the mainspring for Stilwell's preoccupation with Burma.

The battle was quickly joined as Stilwell vs. Chennault. My participation in this controversy was highly embarrassing to the War Department since it violated all the strict rules of military protocol. I was a junior partner in the C.B.I. delegation, not even rating an aide. Junior partners were to be seen but not heard. My seat was off in one corner where it was particularly difficult for me to hear the proceedings. Stilwell, as the senior partner, was always called on for his opinions first, after which my views were requested. This put me in the position of continually contradicting my commanding officer and was hardly appreciated by either Stilwell or his good friend Marshall. The British, who had their own problems with Stilwell, had difficulty in concealing their amusement at this turn of events.

I welcomed the opportunity to present my case before the highest Allied military tribunal and openly defend my plans against their critics. Under the military system these opportunities are rare. Stilwell, on the other hand, resented being forced into open debate on his operations. He seemed to think it was beneath his dignity as a theater commander to have to justify his decisions before subordinates. During Trident Stilwell was curt, surly, and short tempered, and even his friends Marshall and Stimson were disappointed with his exhibition.

The basic issue between us was whether the war should be fought in Burma on the well-defended Japanese perimeter where the enemy was prepared and anxious to fight as part of his over-all defensive strategy or whether it should be fought in China, where immediate blows could be struck at the enemy's vitals and where they were neither prepared nor willing to fight. Stilwell's plan was to train Chinese infantry divisions in India with American methods, equip them with American arms, and then lead them back into Burma to wipe out the stain of his earlier defeat and open a land route to China. He proposed an all-out offensive with the British attacking Rangoon in an amphibious operation and other American-trained Chinese divisions jumping off on the Salween front to drive toward his forces in northern

Burma. With the Japanese driven from Burma, Stilwell proposed to train more Chinese troops in East China and eventually mount an offensive to open a port for the American Navy driving westward across the Pacific. It was a sound project as far as it went, but an optimistic estimate of its earliest completion was ten years hence. Never once in his presentation did I hear Stilwell mention the word airplane. His supply plan was based on mules and trucks operating over roads that could not supply a single American division. He was content to fight a strictly ground war with his beloved "men in the trenches."

My plan was basically the same broad concept submitted to Wendell Willkie of using China as a platform for mounting an air offensive against the vitals of Japan. Aircraft strength requirements were boosted to 150 fighters, 70 medium bombers, and 35 heavy bombers. The Hump tonnage required was 4,790 tons for the first three months, building up to a monthly total of 7,129 tons delivered to the Fourteenth Air Force in China thereafter. This was less than the total effort expended on a single heavy-bomber mission over Europe. For this modest investment it was possible to create an effective flank for the entire Pacific strategy to co-ordinate with the Air Force-Navy-Army sweep westward across the Pacific.

The situation along the Japanese perimeter had changed little since the summer of 1942 when I first began expounding these plans. China was still the only place from which the Allies could immediately gnaw at Japanese vitals. It remained so for nearly another year until the fall of 1944. We had already hit the Yangtze ports, Hong Kong, Hankow, Canton, and the coal ports and staging areas of French Indo-China. The Japanese life line through the Formosa Straits and South China Sea was then within range of medium bombers based at Kweilin. Japanese industrial cities of Kobe, Tokyo, Nagoya, Nagasaki, Osaka, and Yokohama were all within B-24 range of the far-eastern Chinese fields. The 308th Heavy Bomb Group was already in China.

Timing was keyed for immediate action. With extraordinary drive and imagination in getting supplies rolling across the Hump, the counter-air-force blitz could begin that very summer when the good fighting weather broke over East China in July. Allowing ample time for clearing the air over China and additional runway construction on existing fields, I was sure the B-24's could begin fire-bomb raids on Japanese cities before the end of 1943. This was a full six months before the B-29's were able to begin sporadic high-altitude bombing



of the Japanese Islands and fifteen months before B-29 fire-bomb raids actually began.

My precise timetable called for a two-month operation against the Japanese Air Force in China beginning in July. The Japanese did not want to expend major air effort in China, but if strongly challenged, they would be forced to or face a crippling blow to their war economy. During the final month of counter-air-force operations B-25 bombers would begin pounding the China coast ports, Hainan Island, and the Gulf of Tonkin. Second phase, beginning in September 1943, would extend the B-25's range to sweep the Formosa Straits and the South China Sea. The 308th Bomb Group would move into the East China fields and begin bombing Formosa and the Shanghai-Nanking area with its B-24's. By the end of November, at the earliest, it would be possible to begin bombing Japanese shipping from the southern tip of Korea to Cam Ranh Bay in Indo-China and to begin operations against the industrial cities of Honshu and Kyushu. If this seems fantastic remember that without the minimum supplies requested, the Fourteenth Air Force eventually conducted all of these operations with the exception of bombing Japan.

To begin these operations I needed the addition of only three fighter squadrons and three B-25 squadrons to units already in China and the immediate flow of supplies over the Hump at a monthly rate of 4,700 tons.

Stilwell's chief criticism of my plans were:

1. The aerial supply route across the Hump could not be expanded to meet my supply requirements. The Air Transport Command quickly exploded that objection by accelerating to a 13,000-ton monthly delivery rate less than eight months later.

2. Any expanded air activity in China would provoke the Japanese into an offensive to capture the East China air bases used by the Fourteenth. Stilwell estimated that fifty Chinese divisions would be required to defend the bases. I always thought this estimate curious in view of his own willingness later to set out on the reconquest of Burma with only two Chinese divisions and 3,000 American troops—a job that eventually required 100,000 Chinese, the British Fifteenth Army, the Tenth and Fourteenth U.S. Air Forces, Wingate's Raiders, and the First U.S. Air Commando. I claimed that the combination of American air support and Chinese ground troops could defend the bases against all but a major Japanese ground offensive. If the Japanese did mount a major offensive in China, the drain on their far-flung

battle line elsewhere would be ample compensation for whatever might be lost in China.

Stilwell kept harping on the fate of the airfields in Chckiang Province that had fallen during the Japanese offensive provoked by the Doolittle raid in the spring of 1942. I pointed out that this Japanese offensive had been made against a poorly equipped Chinese army operating without any air support. I argued that a combination of able Chinese leadership such as that of Hsueh Yo, his well-trained troops, and an American air effort would be sufficient to keep the Japanese from taking our eastern bases. Stilwell never seemed to grasp the point that these factors could make any difference in the East China picture.

I also assumed in presenting my case to Trident that the Chinese troops defending our vital eastern air bases would be provided with some American lend-lease equipment—principally small-arms ammunition, machine guns, mortars, and light artillery, all of which were easily transportable by air. I was not aware at Trident that Stilwell would, as he later did, bitterly oppose sending a single American bullet to any Chinese armies not under his direct supervision, no matter how desperate their struggle against the Japanese, or how vital their success to the over-all Pacific strategy. When it became apparent during Trident that Stilwell had no concrete plans for military action in China except for his proposed Salween operation directed at Burma, I included in my revised plans for the China air offensive, submitted after Trident, and in all of my written battle plans thereafter, the detailed tonnage requirements in lend-lease equipment for Chinese ground troops who were to assist the Fourteenth Air Force by defending our key bases. Yet Stilwell has repeatedly made the statement that I promised to hold East China with airpower alone, unaided by any ground troops.

In these statements he was telling less than the whole truth. There is ample documentary evidence to prove that my plans for air operations in China were based on co-ordinated action between Chinese ground troops and American air forces, with airpower assuming the major burden in this joint effort. The battle record of the Fourteenth Air Force, which includes five major campaigns fought in close co-ordination with Chinese ground armies, is perhaps even better evidence of my position on this matter than the documents involved, since I have always subscribed to the doctrine that actions speak louder than words.

In a sense, argument on Japanese reaction to a China air offensive

was academic at Trident, although it later was expanded into a burning issue by Stilwell. The Generalissimo had stated to both President Roosevelt and myself that decisive military action in China was required immediately to avert Chinese collapse. He made it quite clear that he regarded the risks of continued inactivity as greater than those that might be incurred by possible Japanese retaliation to any Allied effort. The real problem of Trident was to decide what kind of military effort would be most effective for the purpose.

The decision of Trident endorsed my plan. A presidential directive was prepared ordering the Air Transport Command to boost Hump air lift to China to a minimum of 8,000 tons monthly. The Fourteenth Air Force was given first priority on 4,700 tons monthly to begin the first phase of operations. As a consolation prize Stilwell got second priority on 2,000 tons monthly to equip Chinese armies in Yunnan for the Salween campaign to support his Burma offensive. Tonnage in excess of these priorities was to be split between the air and ground forces at the theater commander's (Stilwell's) discretion.

The Trident decision put Stilwell in the embarrassing position of being charged with execution of a subordinate's plan with which he violently disagreed. Normal military procedure under these circumstances would have called for a change in command. However, Stilwell stayed on, and it was not surprising that he devoted his major effort to maneuvering for a change more to his liking in the Trident plans than to carrying out the orders of his superiors on the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

Stilwell never admitted his defeat at Trident and privately contended in the C.B.I. that he never received the presidential directive authorizing Fourteenth Air Force Hump priorities. However, Stilwell's ardent admirer and strong backer, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, stated in his recently published memoirs: "In spite of all opposition Chen-nault's view was approved by the Washington conference of May 1943. Stilwell himself was called to this conference but his advocacy was unsuccessful."

If Stilwell merely chose to ignore the presidential directive, it was not the first time he failed to carry out direct orders from his commanders-in-chief in the United States and in China.

Aside from the Trident Conference sessions, which included two meetings at the White House with the President and Winston Churchill, I had three private talks with Franklin D. Roosevelt and one with Mr. Churchill. The President's military aide, Major General "Pa" Watson, interrupted us after an hour of the first meeting to restore the

normal flow of White House traffic. The President had a keen appreciation of China's place in the military and political strategy of the Pacific arena. He was acutely aware that China was the missing keystone in Japan's Asiatic arch of triumph. He was determined that China be kept in the war at all costs. His policy was aimed at creating a strong pro-American China to emerge from the war as a great stabilizer among the oppressed peoples of the Orient. I have a deep conviction that had he lived the debacle of our postwar floundering in China and the incredible folly of the Marshall mission would never have occurred.

Sino-American co-operation on a genuine basis through all working levels rather than merely a top-level *rapprochement* was stressed by the President. He was enthusiastic over my idea of a Chinese-American wing in which Americans and Chinese would work and fight together and heartily endorsed plans for building up the Chinese Air Force to where it could stand alone without American aid at the end of the war. On these points he was strongly opposed by the War Department, which could not see beyond the requirements of the immediate tactical situation and was unwilling to invest anything in postwar stability. This was the first time I fully realized the sharp divergence between the broad American policy set by the President and the narrow military program advocated by the War Department. Later it explained for me many of the reasons why the United States is so successful at winning a war and so inept at making the peace.

The President too was shocked to find out how pitifully small our forces in China really were, and I gathered from his conversation that he often had difficulty in getting unvarnished facts on many situations from his subordinates, particularly from the military.

He had great faith in the Hump air lift when most of his military advisers assured him it was thoroughly impractical, and I know it delighted him to be able to award the Air Transport Command India-China Wing a Presidential Unit citation when it delivered 13,000 tons to China in January 1944 only eight months after Trident.

He was particularly appreciative of the strategic possibilities of shipping strikes in the Formosa Straits and the South China Sea. He was convinced that Japanese merchant shipping was the key to the enemy war effort. The President asked if a China-based air force could sink a million tons of Japanese shipping a year. I replied that if we received 10,000 tons of supplies monthly my planes would sink and severely damage more than a million tons of shipping.

He banged his fist on the desk and chortled, "If you can sink a million tons, we'll break their back."

Mine was no idle boast. Operating on considerably less than 10,000 tons of supplies monthly, the Fourteenth Air Force sank and damaged 2,270,689 tons of Japanese merchant shipping, in addition to 32 naval vessels including 2 cruisers. This was in the two years following Trident.

The President was also intensely interested in the character of the Generalissimo. At one Trident conference when Stilwell was expostulating on the poor quality of Chinese leadership, the President interrupted him.

"What do you think of the Generalissimo?" he asked.

"He's a vacillating, tricky, undependable old scoundrel, who never keeps his word—" Stilwell growled.

"Chennault, what do you think?" the President interrupted, turning to me in the corner.

"Sir, I think the Generalissimo is one of the two or three greatest military and political leaders in the world today. He has never broken a commitment or promise made to me," I replied.

On my last morning in Washington, I was busy cleaning out my desk at the Pentagon when a White House secretary called with word that the President wished to see me again. I postponed my departure one day and saw him again late in the afternoon. He wanted to know if I had everything I wanted from the conference. I assured him that if I got the supplies promised, the Fourteenth Air Force would do well. The President called for detailed maps of the China coast, and we went over my plans once again in great detail. He was greatly interested in just how we were going to do the job—what ports fighters would dive-bomb; which sea lanes the B-25's would sweep; the channels that could be mined by B-24's. Seldom have I had such an interested listener for my tactical expositions. Finally he seemed satisfied.

Leaning back in his chair he said, "Now I want you to write me from time to time and let me know how things are getting along."

"Do you mean you want me to write to you personally?" I asked.

"Yes, I do," he replied.

During the next eighteen months I wrote a half-dozen personal letters to the President fulfilling this request and received personal notes of encouragement from him. Some of my letters found their way to the War Department again, and for this alleged breach of military protocol General Marshall has never forgiven me. To him

it was convincing proof that I was intriguing against his old friend Stilwell.

Shortly before I left Washington, I had breakfast with Winston Churchill. He wanted me to return to England with him for a visit, undoubtedly aimed at having me absorb some of the British point of view. The Japs had bombed Kunming again on May 15. Movements that could easily be the beginning of an offensive on the upper Yangtze were also reported. My anxiety over China forced me to decline. I headed back for China with mixed feelings—on the one hand Trident seemed to have solved all my problems, and on the other I couldn't see how it could possibly be that simple. Around the top-level conference table the war is a neat precise series of operations that come ready-made out of planners' brief cases, figured out to the last man, round of ammunition, and can of rations. These beautiful planning pictures quickly blur in the field. When the plans go awry, as they always do in varying degrees, it is the field commander who must take over and win or lose with what he has at the moment, not what the plans eventually call for. There is a tremendous gulf between the military planners and the military operators. Both are necessary, but it has been my experience that while an operator can be a planner, the planners seldom succeed in an operational command. Some of the biggest military busts of the war can be easily traced to the fundamental flaw of putting a professional planner into an operator's job.

The full promise of Trident was never fulfilled in the field, but it did pave the way for establishment of an effective air force in China. Without the decisions of Trident the air effort in China would have continued to languish on the C.A.T.F. scale, and when the fate of China tottered in the balance during the final months of 1944, the air force that eventually saved it would simply not have existed.

By the time conditions in China fulfilled the preliminary requirements of the Trident directive, the Quadrant Conference was in session at Quebec (September 1943), and a new strategy for Asia slipped easily out of the planners' brief cases. However, the War Department learned one lesson from Trident. Never again did they allow me to participate in a Combined Chiefs of Staff planning session. I regarded that as either a compliment to my persuasiveness or a tacit admission of my tactical doctrines. It was much the same kind of tribute the Japanese paid me when, after every bombing of Kunming, their radio stations reported that I had been killed.

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DURING the remainder of 1943 the Fourteenth Air Force slowly changed from a band of aerial guerrillas into a highly specialized striking force that began to take significant toll of the enemy's two most precious commodities—planes and merchant ships. The Fourteenth was still the smallest American air force overseas, and it still covered the largest territory. We divided China with the Chinese Air Force, with the Fourteenth responsible for everything south of the Yangtze River. During the year, our bombs burst from Burma east to Formosa and from the Yangtze south to the Tropic of Cancer.

Commanding an air force brought considerable personal change in my mode of working and living from the hit-and-run days of the A.V.G. and C.A.T.F. Much of the personal touch vanished from our operations. I no longer had time to chat with each new fighter pilot arriving in China. The cool operations cave at Kweilin saw less of me. My headquarters in Kunming acquired a permanent air, and I again became a resident of Yunnan. The Chinese Air Force built a modest tile-roofed adobe cottage on a gentle slope overlooking the airfield and presented it to me for my home. The donors wished that, wherever I might go after the war, I would remember this permanent home in the province where my airmen first cleared the sky of enemy bombs. I lived in that cottage, surrounded by rice paddies and shaded by a grove of tall cedars, for nearly three years and have returned to it several times since the war.

My personal household consisted of my chief of staff, Brigadier General "Buzz" Glenn; Colonel Tom Gentry, my personal physician and chief flight surgeon of the Fourteenth; and Captain Joe Alsop, who also functioned as mess officer. Two Chinese houseboys, Riley and Gunboat; a cook; my Chinese chauffeur Wong, who had been with me since 1938; and Joe, the dachshund, completed the staff.

My other personal equipment reflected our supply straits. A battered

Buick, twice badly damaged by bombs and a venerable veteran of the retreat from Burma, served as staff car. My personal plane was a Douglas twin-engine C-47 constructed principally from a salvage heap. Fortunately I enjoyed a succession of excellent personal pilots in "Tex" Carleton, Al Nowak, and finally my old Trapeze partner, Luke Williamson, who returned to command the 322nd Troop Carrier Squadron. In less capable hands the combination of the old hulk and China weather might have caused trouble. Most of my flying was done in the copilot's seat although, when we approached the duck and dove country around Kunming Lake, I often took over and buzzed the ponds to observe game and fowl.

With a more sedentary headquarters life, I got my exercise hunting and kept our table well stocked with Burma geese, ducks, doves, pheasants, and sand-hill crane in season. Some of the most delicious breakfasts I have ever eaten consisted of broiled teal duck and a cup of black coffee. Annually Louisiana friends on the State Conservation Committee sent me several cases of canned oysters with which I concocted truly magnificent dove pies. We raised okra in our own garden patch for gumbo, and a sack of corn meal that I brought to China with the A.V.G. kept us supplied with hot cornbread sticks. The three Soong sisters—Madame Sun Yat-sen, Madame Chiang, and Madame Kung—thoughtfully supplied me with the preserved peppers and hot sauces I loved so well.

By the end of the year all of my six sons were in the war effort. Jack commanded a fighter group in the Aleutians and later did a similar job in China. Max was an air-traffic controller at the Air Transport Command's Morrison Field. Pat was a Mustang (P-51) pilot in England, Charles an A.A.F. radio mechanic, Bobby an aviation cadet and David fought in the Solomons aboard the cruiser *Helena*.

My working day began at 7 A.M. with a half hour of handling most urgent radios before staff meeting. After a general staff meeting came a tactical planning session with unit commanders and key staff officers. The rest of the morning until lunch at 1:30 P.M. was spent ploughing through the endless mass of operational and social correspondence that flowed in an overwhelming avalanche of paper every day. I have often been intrigued by the idea of a war from which paper was barred by mutual agreement. After lunch I napped until 3 P.M. and then worked on through to dinner at 7 P.M. Before dinner I usually managed a badminton game with Glenn, Tom Gentry, or Alsop. Once a week I took an afternoon off for hunting or baseball and found my pitching arm was still pretty good. In both hunting and baseball I



found the complete relaxation so necessary to break the strain of my work.

After dinner I generally read or played rummy with "Buzz" Glenn until bedtime. I thrived on this routine. When I left China in the summer of 1945, I had gained forty-five pounds and expanded four inches in my chest and only three inches around my waist.

The steady stream of distinguished military and civilian visitors that flowed across the Hump with more regularity than the Fourteenth's supplies taxed our meager facilities for hospitality. What business brought most of them to China was hard to discern, but I soon gave up my mental calculations of the Hump tonnage they diverted from combat operations—it was too excruciating a torture.

My tactical commanders were frequent dinner guests at the cottage and many a maneuver was first charted on our white cotton table cloths. One of the itinerants whose visits we always welcomed was one-eyed, one-armed Lieutenant General Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart V.C., personal representative of Prime Minister Churchill in Asia. Carton was a doughty old warrior who had campaigned with imperial armies in almost every war since Kitchener retook Khartoum. He was always full of the latest top-level military intelligence, and I suspect it was to his reports to London that I owed occasional congratulatory personal notes from Churchill. Visits of Major General Gordon Grimsdale, chief of British intelligence in China, were also pleasant occasions. Gordon always gave the Fourteenth the fullest support from his small but able group in China.

Certainly the most baffling guest was Henry Wallace who was then Vice-President of the United States. He was the most athletic man I have ever encountered. On landing at Kunming, his first request was for a volleyball game. We hastily organized two teams of staff officers and enlisted men and began to play in our only hangar with a water proof roof. After five games, with Wallace still going strong at the net, I left unobtrusively to return to work leaving Glenn in command of the volleyball court. Wallace kept them at it all afternoon. When I returned home for dinner, he was vigorously swatting a badminton shuttlecock in our front yard with Glenn and two colonels. He gave that up to persuade me to pitch baseball to him. I threw for half an hour with no sign of Wallace weakening, so I grooved one that he easily whaled over the bamboo fence far out into the rice paddies. "Buzz" Glenn tromped the ball out of sight in the paddy mud, and we finally got to eat dinner.

After dinner Wallace lured me to the ping-pong table. Again after

a few games I quit and went to bed, while Wallace took on Glenn. In the morning Glenn told me they had played until 11 p.m. and that he had beaten Wallace twelve straight games before he had the tact to let Wallace win one and retire gracefully. We were certainly relieved to see Wallace depart for Chungking the next day. There he astonished the Chinese by refusing to ride in a ricksha and climbing between the ricksha shafts to pull it himself. Wallace undoubtedly intended it as a sympathetic gesture to indicate his feelings for the common man, but the baffled coolies thought he was trying to ruin their livelihood, and there were angry mutterings before Wallace was quickly whisked away.

In my role as an air-force commander most battles were fought with the crackle of top-priority radiograms, the chatter of typewriters, the shuffling of papers, and around the inevitable conference tables of Washington, Delhi, and Chungking. For combat results I was more and more dependent on my tactical unit commanders in the field. Fortunately I was blessed with excellent tactical leaders—Brigadier General “Casey” Vincent commanded all operations in the east and south to the Indo-China border. Brigadier General Jack Kennedy commanded the Sixty-ninth Wing, which operated from the border of Indo-China through Siam and Burma and supported the Chinese armies on the Salween river. Brigadier General Russ Randall was charged with the defense of the B-29 bases and other operations in Szechwan and Shensi provinces to the north. Brigadier General “Winnie” Morse, succeeded later by Colonel Al Bennett, commanded the Chinese-American Composite Wing which covered the gap between Randall’s operations in the north and Vincent’s operations in the east. The 308th Group of heavy bombers—ably commanded in turn by Colonels Beebe, Bill Fisher, and “Tiny” Armstrong—was our strategic force and was employed wherever juicy targets could be located. The B-25 group of medium bombers was commanded by such outstanding leaders as Colonels Morris Taber and Joseph “Preacher” Wells. The B-25’s were usually assigned to a wing for operations but were frequently employed as a strategic force with the B-24’s against specially selected targets.

Wing commanders had the support of such able unit commanders that a single group and sometimes a squadron was often detached from the wing and operated as an independent task force. Among the outstanding group and squadron commanders were Colonels Bruce Holloway, “Tex” Hill, Jack Chennault, my oldest son, Ed Rector, Charley Older, Bill Reed, Ed McComas, Harry Pike, John “Pappy” Herbst,

Johnny Alison, and Majors George McMillan, Arthur Cruikshank, Elmer Richardson, Phil Loofburrow, Ajax Baumler, Jim Bledsoe, Ed Goss, and many others whose names and exploits cannot be recited within the limits of this book.

Just as I was blessed with excellent tactical leaders so was I cursed with an excess of mediocre staff officers. Geographically China was the end of the Air Forces line, and some staff officers were acquired simply because China was the farthest they could be shipped from scene of their previous omissions. Notable exceptions to this rule were: Colonel Fred C. Milner, our adjutant general, and as fine a soldier and military administrator as I have ever seen; Colonel Jesse Williams, chief intelligence officer, who had a long practical background in the Orient as a prewar oilman; Colonel Howard Means and Captain Joe Alsop, who did brilliant jobs in my plans section; Lieutenant Colonel John Williams, who kept the radio air-raid-warning net in operation in addition to providing point-to-point and air-to-ground combat communications; Lieutenant Colonel Walter Thomen, whose statistical section kept vital facts at my finger tips and bolstered many a top-level fracas with indisputable figures; and Colonels Clarence Talbot and Bob Howard, who wrestled untiringly with the endless problems of supply and maintenance.

Many times I considered replacing some of the weaker staff links, but after a few experimental shifts in which replacements were simply exiles from the Pentagon, I gave it up and struggled along with the men I had. It took at least six months for a staff officer to acquire sufficient background on China to function usefully even in routine matters. So I settled for a mediocre permanent staff of limited use rather than the possible brilliance of a constantly changing but completely useless personnel. I suspected the war might not last long enough for me to find the perfect staff combination. General Glenn, who was sent to China to stiffen military discipline, snap up salutes, and inject spit and polish into the Fourteenth, acquired a touch of China fever himself and turned out to be a loyal chief of staff and a good companion.

As the Fourteenth grew, more and more of my time was spent in the tangled snarls of logistics. Logistics is just a staff-college name for supply and until the end of the war supply remained the most critical problem in China.

The Fourteenth Air Force operated at the end of the longest and most complicated supply line of the war. Our supply problems were beyond the comprehension of anyone who had not actively wrestled



Bull's-eye by Liberators  
of the 308th Bomb Group  
on Vinh wipes out the  
only railroad repair shops  
in Indo-China.



China Air Task Force fighter pilots with a shark-nosed P-40 after an air battle over Kunming. (Front row) Lieut. Joe Griffin, Lieut. Mack Mitchell, Capt. John Hampshire, and Capt. Hollis Blackstone; (on the plane) Col. Bruce Holloway, Lieut. Col. John Alison, and Lieut. Roger Pryor.



Lieut. Col. John "Pappy" Herbst with his score of eighteen Japanese planes and one German plane.

with them. Major General Henry Aurand, who had handled some tough supply problems, including supplying the European invasion from the Normandy beaches without a major port, shuddered when he came to China and described our supply problems as bizarre and fantastic. Aurand tackled these problems with a vigor and skill that produced significant results before V-J day.

First link in the incredible haul was a 12,000-mile sea lane from the United States to Indian ports. It was just as far whether the ships left Atlantic ports and traveled via South Africa or loaded at California ports and sailed the Pacific around southern Australia. For more than a year only the western India ports of Karachi and Bombay were open to Allied shipping. This meant a 1,500-mile haul across the patchwork of wide- and narrow-gauge Indian railways without a single through trunk line. At the end of this stage everything funneled into the Assam-Bengal narrow-gauge railroad originally built to haul the Assam tea crop to Calcutta. In the dead-end valley of Assam nestling in the shadow of Himalayan peaks, the Air Transport Command took over with a 500-mile air lift across the Hump to a cluster of airfields in Yunnan. In Yunnan our problems were just beginning. The Fourteenth's most important fighting bases lay 400 to 700 miles east of Yunnan. The supply line leading to them was a patchwork of railroads, rivers, and a 300-mile stretch of mountain road that was far worse than the Burma Road. Under ideal conditions, seldom experienced, a ton of supplies took eight weeks to filter through this weird pipe line from Yunnan to the eastern bases. Sometimes half the aviation gas in China would be tied up in the pipe line. Since most conventional maps of the Orient have an extremely large scale, they give a false impression of Asiatic distances when compared with domestic geography. It was more than 3,000 miles from western India supply ports to our targets on Formosa. It was as though an air force based in Kansas was supplied from San Francisco to bomb targets from Maine to Florida.

Mastery of the Hump was one of the great epics of the war. However, it posed no great problem for experienced personnel of commercial-air-line caliber. American pilots of C.N.A.C., who made the first Hump survey flight in November 1941, proved that. All through the war they operated across the Hump with better regularity, lower losses, and greater efficiency than A.T.C., Troop Carrier, and Combat Cargo squadrons. In an efficiency rating scaled to the number of planes operated by each organization, C.N.A.C. rated first, followed by Troop Carrier Command, with A.T.C. third.

From the fall of Rangoon in March 1942 to the opening of the Stilwell Road in 1945, the Hump was the only way to reach China. Everything the Fourteenth Air Force used for three years, from blockbusters to paper clips, was flown across the Hump. Even after the Stilwell Road and its adjacent pipe line were operating, the bulk of all supplies delivered to China flew over the Hump.

A.T.C.'s problem on the Hump was enormously complicated by green pilots, use of untested planes, lack of all-weather airfields in Assam, poor weather reports, and terribly inadequate maintenance facilities. Two thirds of the first 700 A.T.C. pilots sent to the Hump had no twin-engine experience. The C-46 (Commando) came to Assam directly from the Curtiss-Wright Buffalo plant leaving the inevitable bugs of a new plane to be worked out by green pilots in bad weather with overloads. After its bugs were eliminated in a bloody test period on the Hump, the C-46 became the standard work horse of that operation. I now use it with full confidence as the mainstay of my civil air line in China.

A.T.C. went through a grim ordeal during the summer of 1943. Mechanical failures grounded the C-46 for weeks; monsoon rain flooded the Assam airfields; Jap fighters began to prowl the Hump shooting down unarmed transports. Yet with only 8 converted Liberator transports (C-87) and 25 C-46's operating off the only paved runway in Assam, at Chabua, A.T.C. managed to deliver 5,000 tons to China in July—a better than 500-per-cent increase over the pre-Trident performance.

During its three years of Hump operations, A.T.C. delivered 736,374 tons to China and lost 468 transports—nearly as many planes as the Fourteenth lost during three years of combat. To A.T.C. Colonels Edward Alexander and Thomas Hardin and General Earl Hoag goes the credit for building up the Hump during the critical period when prospects for success seemed dim. Bill Tunner took over toward the end and pushed the tonnage up to incredible figures. Tunner recognized no limit to the tons that could be delivered by air, provided air planes and airfields were made available.

Although the Hump was the most spectacular link in the Fourteenth's supply chain, it was never a real bottleneck after its initial development was completed. It is an astonishing tribute to airpower that from the beginning of 1944 to the end of the war the Hump air lift was able to handle more tonnage than the Assam-Bengal railroad and Brahmaputra River barge line could deliver to the Assam airfields. This Indian land line of communications was restricted by changes in

railroad gauges; ferries across the Brahmaputra River; sabotage by anti-British Indians; and additional demands imposed by the British Army on the Manipur front and Stilwell's northern Burma venture. By the fall of 1943 the Hump was delivering the tonnages set by Trident. For the rest of the war, the Hump was capable of supplying Fourteenth Air Force tonnage requirements with ease. However, the Fourteenth seldom received more than half of total tonnage delivered to China. During the most critical period of the war in China, Hump capacity was crippled by diversion of 300 transports to bail out Stilwell and the British, who were again on the brink of catastrophe in Burma and facing a defeat more disastrous than their rout by the Japanese in 1942.

The year that Stilwell and Bissell allowed the Hump potential to remain undeveloped (summer 1942 to end of Trident in May 1943) was a tremendous loss both to the Chinese war effort and to our entire Pacific strategy. If Stilwell had supported the Hump build-up in 1942 instead of waiting until a presidential directive rammed it down his throat in 1943, the supply crises that later crippled the Fourteenth's air offensive in China could hardly have materialized.

Critical bottleneck in the Fourteenth's supply line was a 500-mile stretch of highway threading through the Kweichow Mountains. It was the only link between the West China railhead at Kutsing, 80 miles northwest of Kunming, and the East China railroad system that began at Tushan in Kweichow Province. From Tushan the railroad ran to our base at Liuchow, key distribution center for the East China network of airfields. From Liuchow, railroads, river boats, and trucks completed the job.

Our problem was to develop capacity for moving 10,000 tons monthly to East China bases. The Kutsing-Tushan highway was the only formidable obstacle. Operations by the Chinese Southwest Highway Transport Association, which did not begin until early 1943, could move 2,300 tons a month over the highway with a fleet of 800 anemic alcohol- and charcoal-burning trucks. All of the trucks were in bad shape and required constant maintenance. Alcohol fuel came from Chungking 300 miles away. The road was hardly more than an expanded mule trail in many of its tortuous windings through the mountains. Landslides were frequent and road-repair equipment nonexistent. Malaria, dysentery, and cholera took heavy toll among the truck and maintenance crews. Malnutrition slowed the remainder.

This supply route was the key to all military effort in China. The Fourteenth Air Force required it to maintain combat operations from



its East China bases against the Japanese life line. With a 5,200-ton capacity on this road we could have held East China and with 10,000 tons mounted a sustained air offensive on enemy targets from Peiping to Saigon. If Stilwell had ever intended to carry out his announced plan to train and equip Chinese armies to take Canton, he would have required a 50,000-ton minimum monthly capacity on this highway.

If Stilwell's neglect of the Hump seemed strange, his studied indifference to the China internal-supply problem was incredible. The whole purpose of his Burma campaign was allegedly to open a supply route to China, yet for two years he made absolutely no plans to prepare for distribution of those supplies in China after his road opened.

Transport of military supplies in China was controlled by the Services of Supply, responsible directly to Stilwell. Although there was no transport capacity to East China during 1942, it was not until the next year that Stilwell's S.O.S. recognized the problem. A single civilian, L. K. Taylor, was assigned the Herculean job without either staff, supplies, or the real authority to do the job. Naturally he failed to attain our objectives. What little help he got came not from S.O.S. but from China Defense Supplies and Foreign Economic Administration officials who provided some badly needed spare truck parts and repair facilities to prevent a complete collapse of the highway system.

The situation remained so bad that on December 30, 1943, I wrote a sharp letter to Stilwell demanding that he set up an adequate supply program in China or give me command of my supply line to East China. I flew to Delhi to press the case in person at C.B.I. headquarters. As a result Colonel Maurice Sheehan was sent to China in February 1944 to supervise internal transport for S.O.S. Sheehan did a superb job. But he got no help from theater headquarters. Stilwell repeatedly sabotaged his program by banning shipment of all vehicles to China, diverting alcohol fuel allocated for the highway to Chinese armies on the Salween, and stubbornly insisting that the highway was strictly a Chinese problem and must be solved by them without American help. In spite of all this, Sheehan and Taylor boosted the highway capacity to 6,000 tons by October 1944. But like everything else where the ultimate responsibility rested with Stilwell, this action came too late to do any good. By that time all but one of our main East China bases had fallen to the Japanese.

The cost of supplying the Fourteenth over this amazing supply line was terrific. To drop a ton of bombs on Shanghai it was necessary to deliver eighteen tons of supplies to an Indian port. To air-lift gas a distance of 400 miles within China cost us a gallon burned in trans-

ports for every gallon delivered. At our farthest east fields the cost was three gallons burned for every two delivered. Total cost of delivering gas from Indian ports to advanced China bases was actually six times the gas received. When one of my wing commanders stupidly lost 40,000 gallons of gas in evacuating an advanced base, my rage was really kindled by the thought of the 240,000 gallons he had really squandered.

During the entire C.A.T.F. days my entire force operated on less tonnage than the weight of bombs dropped by the Eighth Air Force in a single raid on Germany. The Fourteenth Air Force fought for the first six months of 1944 on supplies that could have been carried by six Liberty ships. When MacArthur planned a China-coast landing in August 1945 that would have paved the way for arrival of a dozen Liberty ships, they would have brought to China supply tonnage equal to that of a year's Hump flying.

An orthodox air force could hardly have existed on our starvation diet of supplies. That the Fourteenth did not immediately succumb to logistical anemia was due to the special type of organization I developed with the tremendous help of the Chinese. Everything the Fourteenth planned or did was conditioned by our lack of supply. Nights when sleep evaded me in my Kunming cottage I pored over maps and manipulated my slide rule, wrestling with logistics. Many long hours were spent flying over unexplored country of West China, charting trails that might be expanded into roads, checking river courses, and eternally searching for alternate routes to the Kutsing-Tushan highway bottleneck. Even our tactics were revised to fit supply.

It was the lack of supplies more than anything else that turned the Fourteenth into primarily a low-level air force. Where a bridge had to be blasted, we couldn't afford the European practice of assigning a group of heavy bombers to plaster it from high level with hundreds of tons of bombs. We had to send a single B-25 to ram home a pair of 1,000-pound bombs from 200 feet, where it was hard to miss. Against moving ships we borrowed the skip-bombing tactics of General George Kenney's Fifth Air Force and used our fighters as dive bombers for accuracy. The toughest battles the Fourteenth fought were the monthly bookkeeping rows with A.T.C., S.O.S., and Stilwell's ground forces over how much Hump tonnage it would be allocated. The rest of the month we fought to get what we had already been allocated.

Since it cost a half ton per man per month to support every American in China, I constantly fought to reduce our overhead against the normal Army tendency to build it up. The Fourteenth Air Force oper-

ated at about half the normal troop strength and fought on one fourth the supplies usually allocated to an air force of its size. To fill the tremendous personnel gaps in our organizations, the Chinese performed all the functions of service troops for us. They did our cooking and housekeeping, built our airfields, operated aircraft-repair factories for us at Kunming and Kweilin, and guarded our planes, airfields, and quarters. Many Chinese soldiers were killed during air raids while standing firm at their posts beside American planes despite the bombs. Chinese pilots also flew with our squadrons, and more than one American owes his life to a Chinese fighter pilot who shot a Zero off his tail.

As a result of the deal made with Jerry Huang and Madame Chiang during A.V.C. days, the Chinese War Area Service Corps continued to house, feed, and do laundry for all American personnel in China for one dollar a day. The Army always felt the Chinese would some day present a larger bill for these services and collected full ration allowances from all American officers. However, the Chinese have never done so. They terminated this agreement only after a large influx of noncombat personnel during early 1945 boosted American troop strength in China to 70,000 and imposed too severe a strain on Chinese resources.

Living off the land with the aid of the W.A.S.C. saved the Fourteenth thousands of tons of Hump tonnage. The W.A.S.C. diet was not always appetizing, but it sustained life and added ton after ton to the rain of bombs on Japanese targets. Feeding the Americans was a tremendous job for the Chinese. The average Chinese lives mainly on rice in the south and noodles in the north. These staples are flavored by a few greens and on festive occasions by small amounts of meat. Americans ate more meat in a single meal than most Chinese families eat in a year. Eventually the drain on livestock slaughtered to feed the Fourteenth Air Force became serious. Eggs were the great staple, although even Chinese chickens could not keep up with the Americans, who polished off two or three eggs every morning.

By far the biggest job the Chinese did for the Fourteenth was in building airfields. There was no Hump space for bulldozers, steam rollers, or portable steel landing mats. Every one of the 100-odd airfields we used in China was built by hand with the sweat and strain of thousands upon thousands of Chinese men, women, and children.

One of the most stirring sights I have ever seen was when flying low over the great network of B-29 fields around Chengtu while they were under construction. More than 350,000 Chinese were swarming over the network of fields with all the outward confusion and inward

planning that is so typical of Chinese construction work. The Nile Valley must have looked like that when the Egyptian pyramids were being built. In three months these Szechwan farmers, numerically equivalent to 30 American divisions or the population of Jersey City, N. J., and their families built four fields with 8,500-foot runways that took the landing impact of the United States' heaviest bombers, plus six fighter fields complete with living quarters, gas-storage pits, revetments, taxi ways, and intrafield roads. It cost the United States \$350,000,000 and drained the supply system of Free China. A total of 1,500 trucks, 1,000 oxcarts, 15,000 wheelbarrows and 200 stone rollers each drawn by 300 people were imported from all over China. A quarter-million workers were drained from the rice fields of Szechwan during spring planting time. A million tons of precious fuel alcohol was burned during the construction period. With their mattocks, shovels, hammers, and wicker carrying baskets these Chinese built runways equal to an 8-inch thick, 16-foot paved road around the entire state of New Jersey; excavated the equivalent of a ditch 3 feet wide and 18 inches deep stretching from New York City to Phoenix, Arizona, and built the equivalent of 1,500 small-family homes.

In addition to the B-29 fields of the Matterhorn Project, Chinese built airfields for the Fourteenth from within sight of the Tibetan border to deep behind the Japanese lines in North and East China. The lean, sinewy Chinese coolie was one of the Fourteenth's most effective weapons. Thanks to him the Japanese were never able to put us out of business no matter how many of our airfields they swallowed with their armies. The ability of the Chinese to build airfields speedily almost anywhere gave the Fourteenth Air Force the vitality of a hydra with two airfields sprouting for each one the Japanese destroyed.

The Fourteenth got along with our Chinese hosts remarkably well considering the vast gulf of national differences. The only serious anti-American friction during the war occurred in Chungking where only the noncombat troops of C.B.I. Theater headquarters were stationed. It was much more difficult to operate in a friendly country such as China, where every bit of construction and many tactical plans required Chinese approval because they infringed on her sovereign rights, than in a "liberated" country where the occupying forces could do as they pleased without any regard for the civil population. Some American commanders in China never did grasp this distinction.

Our good relations with the Chinese were due to my long personal acquaintance with Chinese leaders both military and civilian and to

the solid achievements of the A.V.G., C.A.T.F., and Fourteenth Air Force.

The best ambassadors the United States has ever had in China were the pilots of our shark-nosed fighter planes. From Kunming to the China coast they were the symbol of the end of Japanese terror bombing. As long as the American air umbrella protected them in the skies, the Chinese were willing to put up with considerable nonsense and inconvenience on the ground. It will take many years of formal diplomatic bungling to empty the reservoir of American good will accumulated in China by our aerial victories over the Japanese.

There were ample causes for Sino-American friction. Every new airfield built meant more land taken out of cultivation and less food for the local population. American appetites added to the food shortage particularly since we required most of the choicest items on the Chinese diet. It was hardly possible to test-fire a gun or jettison a bomb without damaging some Chinese. I remember a letter received from a shopkeeper in Kweiyang. As a formation of Liberators flew over the city on their way to Hankow, gunners test-fired their turret guns and some shell casings fell into his shop smashing four bottles of ink. The shopkeeper wrote, not asking for compensation, but only to ask us to be more careful in the future. Many of our mistakes were tragic for the Chinese. Liberators jettisoned their bombs through an overcast after an abortive mission and wiped out a Chinese village below. A navigator's error sent B-25's to attack and wipe out a Chinese general's field headquarters, and inaccurate maps caused another B-25 mission to shower a Chinese town on the Mekong River with incendiaries instead of burning up a Japanese supply center on the Salween.

The Japanese never stopped trying to arouse the Chinese against us. They set a price on our heads with a sliding scale from sergeant on up. A full colonel was worth about \$500,000 Chinese. They spent a lot of time and money on espionage around our bases. But about all they received were some flares set off around airfields to guide night bombers to their targets. Perhaps the most superfluous Japanese activity against the Fourteenth was smuggling poisoned liquor to our bases in cleverly counterfeited Scotch whisky bottles. How anything could be more poisonous than the fusel oil of local Chinese distillates neither I nor my medical staff were ever able to determine.

Chinese feeling toward Americans was not something vague or imagined. It was expressed in a dozen concrete ways, many of which meant the difference between life and death for all concerned. On many American holidays Chinese presented Fourteenth detachments

all over China with gifts, I was deeply touched on the first anniversary of the Fourteenth Air Force to be visited by a delegation of Yunnan Chinese and presented with a cow, a hundred jars of wine, and three pigs for my men in appreciation of their efforts. After local air actions, citizens of the cities concerned often made commemorative silk scarfs and presented them to airmen. When the first Japanese offensive against Kweilin was halted temporarily, merchants loaded trucks with gifts and drove them to the airfields outside the city. I received a heavy flow of correspondence from Chinese of all descriptions offering advice, comfort, and encouragement. One received from a refugee from East China is typical. He enclosed a map of his home town of Wuhsih near Shanghai and a check for \$20,000 Chinese, requesting that it be given to the first American pilot to bomb the city. He wrote, "You may leave a bomb on my home but please take care to save my neighbors. Please do this at Chinese New Years to let those shameful Japs not be so peace and happy."

The most valuable demonstrations of Chinese friendship occurred in the rescues of American airmen shot down in Japanese-occupied territory and the constant flow of intelligence from these areas. In handling both these activities, I dealt with Chinese of all political shades including Communists, independent guerrillas, and anti-Kuomintang dissidents. This was done with full permission of the Generalissimo, who trusted me to confine my efforts to prosecution of the war and abstain from local political manipulations. Outstanding examples of this were our relations with the Communist-controlled New Fourth Army, which had been fighting the Generalissimo's troops as well as the Japanese and was operating in the Yangtze Valley where many of our targets lay. The New Fourth rescued many of our airmen from under the noses of the Japanese, and we in turn supplied them with medicines, radio equipment, pocket compasses, and watches. The Generalissimo never interfered with this activity despite his intense personal enmity toward the New Fourth. Similarly, he countenanced our dealings with Dr. Ho, the underground leader of Shantung Province who was outspokenly critical of the Generalissimo's government.

In many cases the Chinese were more helpful to the Fourteenth Air Force than Stilwell's C.B.I. Theater headquarters. Repeated pleas to C.B.I. headquarters for a new Fourteenth Air Force headquarters compound to house our rapidly expanding staff met with curt refusals. Our old headquarters were so crowded and unsanitary that real work there was almost impossible. We even lacked any kind of an enclosure

necessary to enforce minimum basic security. While our building requests were strangled by official ribbons of red tape, Chinese workmen suddenly appeared on the proposed site of the new Fourteenth headquarters and began building a compound according to our original plans. Officials in charge of the work informed me that this was a Chinese Air Force construction project, which we were welcome to use after it was finished. When C.B.I. Theater headquarters heard of the project they quickly authorized our new headquarters and seized control of the project to save face, while the Chinese snickered at their embarrassment.

A similar situation arose when the Fourteenth needed rest facilities for combat personnel. There was no place in China where leave could be spent and combat personnel desperately needed occasional respites from their dangerous grind to offset the cumulative effects of combat fatigue. I proposed to build a camp on the shores of a lake near Kunming where combat pilots and air-crew men could spend a week or two, depending on their condition, eating reasonably good food, swimming, boating, fishing, or just plain loafing before returning to combat. C.B.I. Theater headquarters gave us another flat no on the project, although in India it was then customary to send Tenth Air Force and A.T.C. personnel, noncombat as well as combat, to rest camps in the Vale of Kashmir. A group of Kunming bankers, headed by Dr. Y. T. Miao, a graduate of the University of Minnesota, heard of our plight and without further ado bought the land needed for the rest camp, began construction of the facilities needed, and offered the entire package for lease to the Fourteenth for one Chinese dollar. Again C.B.I. headquarters belatedly jumped into the project and took over. Before the camp was finished C.B.I. Theater gave it to Services of Supply to operate.

The Japanese got few prisoners from the Fourteenth. At least 95 per cent of all American airmen that landed alive behind the Japanese lines were rescued and guided back to their bases by Chinese. The Japanese made it quite plain during their punitive expedition in the wake of the Doolittle raiders in early 1942 that the penalty for aiding American airmen was, not only death for individuals involved, but annihilation for their families and communities. Yet there is no authentic case of Chinese refusing to aid American airmen behind the Jap lines during the rest of the war. They received aid from the pirates and smugglers of the South China Sea, guerrillas along the Yangtze, Kuomintang and Communist troops on all fronts, and from anonymous farmers wherever the airman dropped from the sky under his billowing

parachute. There was never any formal underground system for these rescues or any price list of reward. Where we could, we reimbursed the Chinese for their help, but most of them never received a nickel for their aid. These rescues were by far the most convincing demonstration of Chinese good will toward Americans and a striking revelation of the almost imperceptible local organizations that bind the Chinese countryside together underneath the surface of conventional disorganization. Of all the American pilots rescued from behind the Japanese lines, only one indulged his personal vanity to break security by publicizing his escape, thereby inviting reprisals on his rescuers.

A hair-raising volume surpassing any fiction could be written detailing these adventures. I wish to mention just a few that were typical.

At one time a Japanese cavalry patrol was within saber's length of the American pilot who shot down Admiral Yamamoto, chief of the Japanese Navy but better known for his boast of dictating peace in the White House. Major Rex Barber returned to combat with the Fourteenth Air Force after a tour in the southwest Pacific during which he had delivered the *coup de grâce* to Yamamoto's transport plane in that notable ambush over Bougainville. Barber was shot down by Jap fighters over Kiukiang while knocking an Oscar off a P-38's tail. One arm was smashed by gunfire, and he broke a leg in bailing out. Barber landed helpless, within sight of Kiukiang, with Japanese patrols fanning out from the city to pick him up. Before the Japanese could find him, local Chinese helped him onto a crude litter and hid him in heavy underbrush, dodging from one patch of bush to another between Japanese patrols. At one time a cavalry patrol halted at the edge of the bush in which Barber and his Chinese rescuers were hiding. The Japanese lieutenant leading the patrol paused to smoke the last cigarette in a pack, then crumpled the empty package and tossed it into the bush. When the patrol moved on, Barber was able to pick up the empty cigarette package without moving from his spot of concealment—so close had been the Japanese. While the Japanese put rigid road blocks on all avenues leading away from the city, the local Chinese smuggled Barber into the city. They kept him there recuperating until the furor died down and he was well enough to be moved in a series of night journeys to Chinese lines.

Two fighter pilots, Lieutenants Gregg and Beneda, shot down in a big air battle over Hankow were written off our roster as dead when there was no word of them within sixty days. Four months later both walked into an advanced base, sporting beards and greatly shrunken



waistlines. Both had been wounded and burned in the fight, and one had broken a leg. They were picked up by farmers inside the Japanese lines and turned over to the Communist New Fourth Army, which operated up to the edge of Hankow. They spent two months behind the lines in a New Fourth hospital and then, concealed in sampans, were filtered through the Japanese lines, via Yangtze tributaries.

Four other fighter pilots were knocked down by flak during a low-level strafe of Shanghai airdromes, 650 air miles from our nearest airfield. They bailed out over the suburbs of that heavily Japanese-garrisoned city but were whisked away by Chinese before the Japanese found them. They were delivered to guerrillas who eventually guided them back to Chinese lines, raiding Japanese outposts along the way.

One of the 11th Bomb Squadron B-25's crashed in Hong Kong harbor after a skip-bombing attack on Japanese shipping. Other pilots in the attack saw it burning on the water and considered the crew dead. Miraculously the crew survived the crash and managed to float their rubber life rafts, but capture appeared certain. Japanese patrol boats put out from Hong Kong Island to take them. Again the inevitable Chinese appeared first—this time a smuggler's junk that was quickly surrounded by other junks. The airmen were passed from one junk to another around the harbor in a sort of maritime shell game until the search was abandoned. Then they were delivered to a pirate's junk that landed them on a stretch of coast held by the Chinese armies.

It was in this sort of an atmosphere that the men of the Fourteenth Air Force lived and worked as we prepared for the final showdown with the Japanese.

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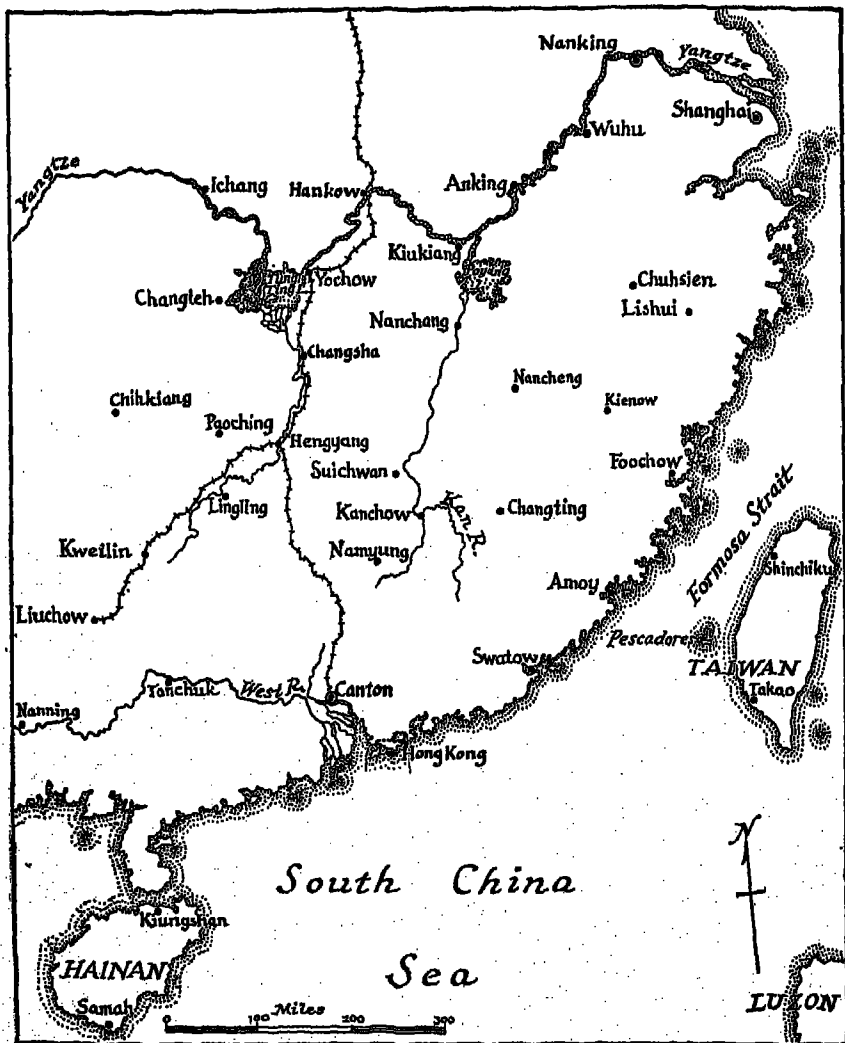
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FIRST real test for the Fourteenth Air Force came during the steaming summer of 1943 over the black karst hills and ripening green rice paddies of East China. While I was at Trident, the Japanese fired a double-barreled blast in China. Their ground offensive erupted on the west bank of the upper Yangtze near Ichang. Its objective was to gain a foothold for a later drive around the Yangtze gorges to Chungking. At the same time the Japanese Burma-based air force pounded the Yunnan Hump bases.

To give Chinese armies in Hupeh Province some air support and still fight with full fighter strength over Yunnan, Brigadier General "Buzz" Glenn, who commanded in my absence, did some fancy shuttling of fighter squadrons between East and West China. It was not unusual during that period for a fighter pilot to be strafing along the Yangtze one day and attacking red-spotted bombers over Yunnan forty-eight hours later. With even the moderate air support the Fourteenth could give over Hupeh, the Japanese drive was checked short of its goal. As the Japanese began to retire in good order, P-40's caught them on the high, embanked roads surrounded by flooded rice paddies that offered no cover. Their slow retreat accelerated into a bloody rout. Sight of our shark-nosed fighters and fat Liberators droning overhead was strong tonic for the Chinese troops.

The air offensive from Burma failed to disturb Hump operations, although if the Japanese had been able to keep the Kunming and Yunnanyi areas alerted with daily feints they might have done far more damage in draining our slim gas supplies and disrupting the flow of transports than the bombs they actually dropped. Time and again the Japanese attacks had us close to the danger line on gas reserves, but their combat losses always prevented sustaining their offensive until it could be decisive.

During this hectic spring, the Fourteenth lost Captain Johnny



Hampshire, whom many rated as the most brilliant fighter pilot ever to fly in China. That was high praise coming from such practitioners of the art as "Tex" Hill, Bruce Holloway, and Johnny Alison. Hampshire shot down fourteen enemy planes in his first six fights before he went down in a melee north of Changsha with a bullet through his stomach. He accounted for two Oscars in his final flight. Chinese rescued Johnny after his plane crashed in the Siang River. By the time they carried him to the Yale-in-China Hospital at Changsha, Hampshire was dead.

On June 14, "Casey" Vincent was sent to the eastern fields with orders to prepare for a fight to the finish when good weather broke over the east in mid-July and Japanese fighters came swarming out of Canton and Hankow like angry wasps after a winter's hibernation.

The Fourteenth's hit-and-run days were over, I thought, and we were ready to slug it out in the first phase of the offensive promised at Trident. "Casey" set up the headquarters of what was later the Sixty-eighth Composite Wing in a Chinese carpenter's shack near the Kweilin operations cave. For more than a year he directed Fourteenth operations, making those bases so costly to the Japanese that they were forced to invest half a million troops and six precious months of their fast-ebbing time to wipe them off the China chess-board.

Not unexpectedly, the materiel promised at Trident failed to arrive anywhere near schedule. Fighter reinforcements were stuck in India by monsoon weather. Hump tonnage for July fell 1,700 tons short of our 4,700-ton priority. Not until November did A.T.C. meet this tonnage requirement. With good weather about to break over East China, I couldn't afford to wait. Defense of Yunnan was stripped to a single fighter squadron split between Yunnanyi and Kunming. Three squadrons of the 23rd Fighter Group, totaling 50 serviceable P-40's, and 15 Mitchell bombers (B-25) of the 11th Bomb Squadron were sent east to man the Hengyang-Lingling-Kweilin line. The 308th Bomb Group was based around Kunming to throw at the Japanese airfields in East China or to pound strategic targets in Indo-China, depending on the pace of the combat.

The 308th was unique among heavy bomb groups. It was entirely self-supporting across the Hump and operated from tactical bases from 500 to 900 miles from its supply bases. Originally, I opposed General Arnold's sending the group to China even as a logistical experiment, because they consumed too much gas. Experience proved I was wrong. Liberators of the 308th became the powerful right-hand haymaker

of the Fourteenth, which landed solid knockout punches when we needed them most.

This group operated much like an old-fashioned muzzle-loading cannon, firing one shot and then taking time out to reload. The 308th had to fly three supply missions across the Hump for every combat mission against the enemy. Sometimes they piled up enough supplies for a series of missions, but they could never keep up sustained operations. Because of this lack of regularity it was difficult for 308th crews to acquire and maintain high standards of proficiency that come only with regular combat flying. As a result their tactical performance was often spotty, combining brilliant bombing with rather hard to explain errors. They took the heaviest combat losses of any group in China and often broke my heart by burning thousands of gallons of gas only to dump their bombs in rice-paddy mud far from the target. However, their bombing of the Vinh railroad shops in Indo-China, the Kowloon and Kai-Tak docks at Hong Kong, and shipping off Saigon were 'superb jobs unmatched anywhere. When Army Air Forces headquarters in Washington tallied the bombing accuracy of every heavy bomb group in combat, I was astonished to find that the 308th led them all. Liberators of the 308th dropped the first Allied bombs on Shanghai and Saigon, sounded the first air-raid alarm in Manila after the fall of Corregidor, and earned fulsome praise from Fleet Admirals Halsey and Nimitz for their patrol work over the South China Seas during the Second Battle of the Philippine Seas when they covered the Navy's blind flank.

Like everything else in China, the 308th Liberators did many things their designers never intended. They skip-bombed ships from mast height, strafed at low level, ferreted out enemy radar stations, mined rivers and harbors, flew transport missions, and on one occasion functioned as fighters.

Bomber boys of the 308th came to China with the standard Air Corps indoctrination that heavy bombers were invincible and needed no fighter escort over their targets. They too had to learn the hard way. Twice during 1943, when the 308th Liberators missed their fighter escort, they pressed on to the target using tactics that showed more courage than good combat sense. Over Haiphong five out of seven B-24's were slaughtered by Japanese fighters before they reached the target. The remaining two, both badly shot up, returned to Kunming without dropping their bombs, and one crashed while approaching the field, killing the entire crew. In another mission to Hankow rendezvous with fighter escort was missed, and the B-24's went on

alone. Again most of the formation was lost to enemy fighters. Both these disastrous raids distressed me because the heavy losses in planes and men were out of all proportion to results. Although I made every effort to do so, I could never completely eradicate even among my own bomber commanders the old prewar Air Corps doctrine of unescorted daylight bombing. It is interesting and somewhat appalling in the postwar years to notice the new independent U.S. Air Force drifting back to the same fallacious doctrine of unescorted bombers so soon after such bloody proof of this error in the air war against Germany and Japan.

The 308th successfully executed one of the best deceptions I ever perpetrated against the Japanese. During late October of 1943 the Japanese sent two fighter squadrons into northern Burma to sweep the Hump and intercept a proposed flight to China by Lord Louis Mountbatten and his staff. Jap fighters were bagging two and three unarmed transports a day and playing hob with transport-crew morale when I hit on an idea to stop them. A.T.C. was still using the C-87, a transport version of the Liberator. A few days before Mountbatten was due in China, I ordered Colonel Bill Fisher to send the 308th well south of the regular transport run on their supply trips to India. They were to fly a loose, ragged formation and carry extra ammunition for their guns.

Sure enough, Jap fighter pilots swallowed the bait, mistaking the B-24 bombers for C-87 transports. They barreled in for the kill with more enthusiasm than sense. The 308th gunners held fire until the Japanese were well within range and then blasted with their powered gun turrets. In three days of this masquerade across the Hump, the 308th shot down and damaged 18 enemy fighters, virtually all the operation strength of the two harassing squadrons. Mountbatten's plane crossed to China unmolested, and the Hump remained clear of enemy fighters for five weeks.

Our summer offensive began on July 9 with a series of smashes against Japanese shipping in the Gulf of Tonkin by the 308th. In six missions they sank 50,000 tons of merchant shipping using only 79 tons of bombs. These attacks came as a complete surprise since the enemy was not yet used to American air attacks through monsoon clouds. By using the thick cloud cover, the Liberators were able to bomb in Indo-China during the monsoon without protective fighter cover, leaving our full fighter strength free for simultaneous operations over East China.

French Indo-China was an important cog in the Japanese war

machine. Economically it ranked second only to the Dutch East Indies as a source of strategic raw materials—coal, manganese, phosphates, cement, industrial alcohol, and tremendous rice exports to feed the industrial workers in Japan. Everything funneled through the Tonkin ports—Hanoi, Haiphong, Hongay, and Campha Port—which also boasted excellent ship-repair facilities and troop-staging areas. Our objective was to cut off the flow of raw materials to Japan's factories by battering the Tonkin ports and making the gulf too hot for merchant shipping. In this we were completely successful. By the end of 1943 Japanese shipping of any size steered clear of the gulf, and the enemy was forced to enlarge port facilities in the huge natural harbor at Samah Bay on Hainan Island to take the place of the Tonkin ports. Our bombings drove native Annamite workers from the phosphate and manganese mines, and they refused to return. One squadron of B-25's and part of a fighter squadron were sufficient to disrupt Indo-Chinese land communications, which were so vital in moving troops and equipment to Thailand, Malaya, and Burma when the strain began to tell on enemy shipping. With a relatively small investment of airpower we were able to keep the Japanese from harvesting the major economic and strategic fruits of this half-hearted ally.

"Casey" Vincent radioed me on July 15 that his preparations in the east were complete, and he was ready to fight. Reconnaissance indicated enemy air strength at Canton and Hankow swelled to 400 planes. Five days later the Japanese fighters sallied forth to blast the Fourteenth out of East China. It was a standard Japanese air blitz—bombers pounding our fields after midnight and fighter sweeps by daylight with a few bombers as P-40 bait. This time they had two new fighter types—the Oscar Mark II, a faster and more heavily armed version of their old stand-by and the Tojo, a stubby, barrel-bodied fighter that looked not unlike a Thunderbolt (P-47); it could outrun the P-40 and was the best all-round fighter in China skies that summer. We were up to P-40K's by that time.

A clumsy attempt of the enemy to trap our fighters backfired badly. One afternoon twenty Oscars attacked Lingling, where no Fourteenth planes were based at the time. Eight P-40's flew down from Hengyang to intercept the formation and shot down five Oscars without loss. As they broke off, a second wave of thirty Navy Zeros approached from Canton accompanied by a twin-engine Dinah recon plane. The Dinah dropped leaflets over Lingling. They were printed in English and challenged the "American fighter command" to a sportsmen's

duel "between equal numbers" over Lingling that afternoon. It added that the results of this combat would convince the Americans it was futile to fight on in China. The P-40's sailed into the Zeros and fought for twenty minutes to a draw. One P-40 broke away from the melee and shot down the Dinah before its last leaflets fluttered to the ground.

The Japanese commanders exhibited a better sense of timing in their July attacks and kept "Casey" hopping to throw the full weight of his fighter strength at their main attacks. Again, without the Chinese warning net our gas and planes would soon have been frittered away in fruitless false alerts. During one big fight over Hengyang the Japanese tried to sneak twenty-seven bombers up from Canton to plaster Kweilin. "Casey" had only four P-40's ticketed as unfit for combat and his headquarters staff to repel the raiders. With three other headquarters pilots, "Casey" took the four ailing P-40's aloft and scared off the bombers by one diving pass through the formation with all guns blazing. The bombers jettisoned their load in rice paddies and scuttled back to Canton. During these battles "Casey" ran his personal score to six Jap planes shot down before I grounded him from combat flying.

For eight days and nights the Japanese attacked. At the end of the eighth day the score stood at 62 Japanese shot down and 46 probably destroyed against loss of 8 P-40's and 3 pilots. On the ninth day the attacks stopped. There was a three-week breathing spell while the Japanese mustered fresh air strength and revised their tactics. During the interval the Fourteenth acquired the 449th Fighter Squadron equipped with P-38's. They arrived from North Africa with a fondness for dogfighting and without spare parts. These pilots refused to believe a P-38 couldn't turn with an Oscar, Zero, or Tojo. As a result the 449th became the only American fighter squadron in China against which the Japs approached an even break.

While the eastern blitz was at its height, Stilwell and I attended a formal dinner at Kunming given by Pai Chung Psi, Chinese National Defense Minister. Stilwell had annoyed me considerably by sending radios to the War Department extolling the performance of the P-40 against Japanese fighters at the same time I was pleading with Air Forces headquarters for P-51's to replace the already obsolete Curtiss planes. Stilwell was also trying to sell the Chinese on the P-40 for their air force. At the dinner with Pai sitting between Stilwell and me, Stilwell devoted most of his conversation to a glowing description of the P-40's performance.



I stood it as long as I could and then snorted at Stilwell, "Well the P-40 can still outdive the Japs, but you have to pull out of a dive sometime or else dig a big hole in the ground."

Stilwell glared back but dropped the subject of the P-40.

Oscars and Tojos were back on August 20 with new tactics. The Jap pilots finally decided to utilize their altitude advantage. Formations of from twenty to fifty fighters shuttled over our fields between Hankow and Canton at 30,000 feet all day trying to lure the P-40's way upstairs. "Casey" had been ordered to plan interceptions over our fields to conserve gas but these new Japanese tactics called for a change in pace. I radioed "Casey" to begin hitting enemy airfields at Hankow and Canton with all he had to force them to get down to our bombers' level. To add weight to the attacks the 308th flew directly from Yunnan bases. The first mission missed fire. A Japanese attack on Hengyang delayed the P-40 escort for the Liberators. Some turned back from the rendezvous but four bombers went on to the Hankow airfields without escort. Flak and fighters shot down two. The next mission with P-38 escort was worse. Enemy fighters snatched the cheese without springing the trap. Four out of seven Liberators went down in flames while the P-38's buzzed along at 30,000 feet oblivious of the fight raging below. B-25's of the 11th Squadron with 23rd Group P-40's hit Hankow airdrome an hour later without loss and destroyed 10 enemy fighters. The Japs gave up on August 26 after losing 91 more confirmed and 26 probables at a cost of 19 American bombers and fighters. The score for the summer was 153 to 27. The Japanese again dulled their offensive edge, but when the smoke cleared away and "Casey" counted his sharknoses, he found only eight P-40's left in first-class condition. We couldn't follow up our advantage and press for a *coup de grâce*.

The summer fighting changed the pattern of the war in China. By fall the main weight of the Fourteenth's effort had shifted from defense to offense and the big air battles were being fought over enemy airfields, not our own. The Japanese Air Force gave up its efforts to knock us out of the air and confined its efforts to night bombing of our bases and defending their own airfields, shipping, and troops from American air attacks. The job of knocking the Fourteenth Air Force out of China was turned over to the Japanese ground forces.

When the Trident timetable of deliveries to China, still lagged critically by the end of summer, I sent "Casey" Vincent back to the Pentagon for thirty days' temporary duty in Army Air Forces Headquarters to explain our situation personally. "Casey" also carried letters

from me to be delivered by safehand to President Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins. Since I had firmly promised the President that by January 1, 1944, the Fourteenth would have crippled a large portion of Japanese aircraft and sunk 500,000 tons of Japanese shipping, I wanted him to know why those promises might not be kept.

We have not been given the tools to do the job [I wrote]. Furthermore much of the good fighting weather has been irretrievably lost. If the air offensive had been launched on schedule, its first phase, establishment of air superiority in southeast China, would already be completed and the second phase, further softening of Jap airpower and hitting sea communications, would now be in progress. The time would be in sight when occupation of our bases nearest the coast would be feasible and the third phase, including long range bombardment of the Japanese Islands, could begin.

Actually it has not been possible to launch even the first phase due to continued weakness in fighter planes. . . . We have succeeded in defeating the Japanese repeatedly only because of the courage, aggressiveness, and determination of our air and ground crews. At this time in the war, American combat units should not be forced to fight against such superior odds as the Japanese possess in China.

To Harry Hopkins, who had been an appreciative listener at Trident, I wrote:

Numerous disappointments have thus far threatened the launching of the China air offensive and now threaten to postpone it altogether. . . . After trying to form the most impartial judgment possible in my situation, I feel that postponement of the China air offensive will be downright tragic.

I am ready to pledge my reputation, such as it is, that the return on the investment will cripple the enemy's total airpower and weaken the sea communications on which his whole system of conquest demands.

An exchange of letters across the Pacific with my old friend General George Kenney, then chief air officer for General MacArthur in the southwest Pacific, indicated I was not the only field commander being fobbed off with unfulfilled promises by the Pentagon planners. Kenney's pilgrimage to Washington had preceded mine by a few months, and he had left filled with the same enthusiasm and brief case full of promises. Nine months later Kenney wrote to me:

They [Washington] gave me and are still giving me a lot of promises about getting more aircraft but everything is coming in slow. Several units originally scheduled for this summer are now due next spring. I'm still operating on a shoe string although not as thin a shoe string as yours. It looks as though both of us are going to have to wait for Hitler to fold before we can get the stuff to go to town.

During the early fall, top-level scenes shifted rapidly in the C.B.I. To complicate what little war effort remained in India, a vast new headquarters known as Southeast Asia Command was set up under Lord Louis Mountbatten. This joint Anglo-American enterprise was a monument to military boondoggling. Bissell was finally replaced as commander of the Tenth Air Force by Major General George Stratemeyer. However, Stratemeyer soon organized the Eastern Air Command, a headquarters of 400 officers in a Calcutta jute mill to supervise all American air activities in India and Burma, and left command of the Tenth to Major General Howard Davidson. Stratemeyer was an old friend of mine and was always willing to support the case for airpower against Stilwell's naïve views on the subject, but he was continually pushed by a staff of military empire builders who made up in personal ambition what they lacked in combat experience. They were in India less than a month before they had organized a plan to bring the Fourteenth Air Force in China under Stratemeyer's command. The Generalissimo promptly rejected this plan, but the seeds were sown and eventually bore fruit.

In September the Quadrant Conference at Quebec again wrestled with planning the war in Asia—this time without any discord from representatives of the China-based air force. A new set of plans was drawn up that never materialized, this time for an all-out attack on Burma complete with British amphibious landing at Rangoon, an airborne attack behind the enemy lines in central Burma, Stilwell's Chinese divisions in north Burma, and the Chinese offensive from the Salween front. Objective of this gigantic venture was to be the opening of a supply road to China with an alleged capacity of delivering 100,000 tons a month. The thousands of British, Indians, Chinese, and Americans who were killed and wounded in the long campaign to open that road would have been interested in the manner its value was set by the planners in Quebec's Château Frontenac. Colonel Maurice Sheehan who participated in the conference and later came to China as our trucking expert told me the story. Sheehan estimated the maximum road capacity at from 20,000 to 30,000 tons

monthly. Another War Department expert ventured a guess of 100,000 tons. The Quebec planners casually split the difference to come up with 65,000 tons—a figure that was never remotely approached after the road opened.

Quadrant plans had hardly filtered down to field commands before another top-level conference (Sextant) was in the mill at Cairo and Teheran. War Department specifically requested that I be omitted from the list of C.B.I. participants in Sextant, but the Generalissimo insisted on my attendance. When all other avenues were blocked, he took me to Cairo in the capacity of chief of staff of the Chinese Air Force, a position I had held since the previous summer. However, I was barred from all conferences except those dealing with lend-lease aid to China, leaving me ample time to play cribbage with my old friend Major General Ralph Royce and see the sights of ancient Egypt.

Quadrant plans for the big Burma offensive foundered again on the British plea that insufficient assault-landing boats were available for either the amphibious attack on Rangoon or a landing in the Andaman Islands and failure of the United States to provide the infantry divisions. While I was at Cairo the Fourteenth Air Force gave a striking demonstration of its capabilities by smashing at Shinchiku, one of the largest bomber-modification and combat-training centers on Formosa. This Thanksgiving Day strike was made possible by the completion of the key base in another East China chain that lay 250 miles east of Kweilin and that much closer to Japan. From the new field at Suichwan our longest-ranged fighters could span the Formosa Straits. "Casey" Vincent planned the Shinchiku strike using a force of 12 B-25's of the veteran 11th and recently arrived Chinese-American Composite Wing. "Tex" Hill led the fighter escort composed of P-38's of the 449th and our only P-51A's of the 76th. By crossing the Formosa Straits just above the wavetops our planes were able to avoid enemy radar detection and struck with complete surprise. A few Jap fighters were buzzing lazily in the traffic pattern around the field apparently practicing landings and take-offs. Rows of twin-engine bombers were parked around the big hangars and machine shops. P-38's struck first, shooting enemy fighters out of the air and then strafing the parked bombers. They pulled up to act as top cover while the bombers sprayed the parking areas with frag bombs and strafed planes and personnel still dashing for the slit trenches. Mustangs came in for a final clean-up strafing and shot down a few Jap fighters that straggled belatedly into the air. Only one American

plane was hit. The Japs lost six fighters shot out of the air and forty bombers burned on the ground. The enemy responded by devoting almost all of his bombing effort in China for the next six months to Suichwan, but as usual he failed to bomb us out. Suichwan with its auxiliary fields at Kanchow, Namyung, and Hsinchong remained a springboard for our attacks on the Japanese jugular until the end of the war. Our low-level-attack tactics of the Shinchiku strike were later duplicated by General Kenney's Fifth Air Force in its smashes at Wewak and Hollandia that broke the back of the Jap Air Force in the southwest Pacific.

Shortly after our Formosa strike the Generalissimo and Stilwell ordered me back to China to direct air attacks on a new Japanese ground offensive developing out of the Hankow bulge area around Tungting Lake. The battle of Changteh, as it turned out to be, will probably never rate more than a footnote in conventional military histories but to me it was doubly significant. First, it marked the beginning of my relations with Marshal Hsueh Yo, commander of the Ninth War Area, in which most of our eastern bases were located, and one of the finest fighting men it has been my privilege to know. Second, it marked the beginning of the Fourteenth Air Force radio-intelligence network that operated in the field with Chinese armies and provided us with the timely, accurate information needed for effective air support for Chinese ground troops. This combination of American air and Chinese ground forces, welded together by effective radio liaison, proved to be a combination the Japanese were never able to defeat. This combination defeated the Japanese at Changteh in 1943, on the Salween in 1944, and at Chihkiang in 1945. Only in the Salween battle did the Chinese have American arms and equipment. During the battle of Hengyang in the summer of 1944 the Sino-American combination was well on the way toward another disastrous defeat of the Japanese when both Chinese and American efforts collapsed from lack of supplies. The Japanese were never able to take an American air base in China so long as air and ground forces had sufficient supplies to keep fighting.

Intelligence was always a sore spot in China. Natural friction of American, British, Chinese, and French interests were aggravated by inter-American service rivalry. Only by keeping clear of the economic and political rivalries of the Allied nations in the Orient was it possible for the Fourteenth Air Force intelligence organization to function continuously with all these jarring elements. For example the Chinese suspected both the French and British of using their intelligence

activities to jockey for postwar position in Asia. As a result the Chinese furnished the Fourteenth with considerable valuable intelligence with the stipulation that we must not pass it on to the British or French.

It was all too easy to become entangled in intelligence pitfalls that would have destroyed the usefulness of our operatives in the field. For this reason I avoided a proffered alliance with Tai Li's notorious Kuomintang secret police. It might have been useful but since Tai's men were engaged in a ruthless man hunt for Communists it would have meant the end of our intelligence and rescue relations with Communist armies in the field. Our only effective policy was to stay well out of inter-Chinese and international politics and convince everybody concerned that the only real interest of the Fourteenth was in successful prosecution of the war. For similar reasons I turned down a British offer of a million-dollar intelligence fund, although it was made with no strings attached at a time when we needed money badly. Incredible as it may seem to disciples of high-powered intelligence methods, most of our most useful results were obtained largely through the reputation of my command for integrity and action.

Primary responsibility for American intelligence in China was given to the Navy by President Roosevelt early in the war. Admiral "Mary" Miles operated a large naval-intelligence group in China throughout the war. Miles had a working agreement with Tai Li, head of the Chinese secret police, and operated principally through that organization. A sizable group of Miles's Navy officers operated in Fourteenth Air Force headquarters under my command. They provided us with shipping intelligence, did photo-interpretation and kept us in constant communication with the Pacific fleet. This effective liaison paid enormous dividends in attacks on enemy shipping. We also provided the Navy with photo reconnaissance for its carrier strikes on Formosa, Indo-China, Hong Kong, and for its proposed amphibious attack on the China coast near Hangchow Bay.

Stilwell exhibited a striking lack of interest in the intelligence problems of the China sector of his command. He was satisfied entirely by Chinese War Ministry intelligence which was passed to his Chungking headquarters and then third hand to the Fourteenth—generally from three to six weeks old by the time it reached us. Stilwell specifically prohibited the Fourteenth from making any attempts to gather its intelligence. Since the Fourteenth Air Force was the only American combat organization in China and needed fresh and accurate intelligence to continue effective operations, I was again faced with the

choice of obeying Stilwell's orders literally and giving up the fight against the Japanese or finding some other method of getting the information so essential to our operations. I solved this problem by organizing the Fourteenth's radio-intelligence teams within the framework of our air-raid-warning control network and continued to depend officially on Stilwell's stale, third-hand Chinese intelligence while acting on the fresh radio reports received hourly from our intelligence men on the scene of the actions involved.

The contrast between our field intelligence and Stilwell's reports was quickly evident as the battle for Changteh developed.

Our first word of the Japanese offensive came on October 28 from one of our radio teams with Chinese armies at the front, reporting that 1,000 Japanese troops had forced a crossing of the Yangtze above Tungting Lake with 40,000 supporting troops on the move along the upper Yangtze. Not until November 5 did Stilwell's G-2 inform us that a battle had begun. By that time our planes had been attacking targets in the battle area for eight days. On November 15 Chungking intelligence was still reporting the drive as a "training maneuver" and asserted the Japanese were incapable of taking Changteh. On November 27 Marshal Hsueh Yo requested ammunition drops to Changteh. P-40's dropped belly tanks loaded with ammunition, rice, and pork to the city's defenders from November 28 to December 2. On December 3, the day Changteh fell, we received our first request from theater headquarters to make ammunition drops on the city. While the battle to recapture Changteh raged from December 3 to December 8, we received no intelligence reports from Stilwell's Chungking headquarters while our field radiomen were providing hourly situation reports to direct heavy air attacks.

Most of our field intelligence officers were old China hands. I tried to pick men who had lived in China before the war, spoke the language, knew the customs, and could live in the field on Chinese food. Captain John Birch, a Georgia Baptist, had been a missionary in Hangchow and was led into our fold by Jimmy Doolittle after Birch had guided Jimmy and his raiders out of East China. Major Paul Frillman had been a prewar Lutheran missionary in Hankow, later served as chaplain of the A.V.G. and returned to the Fourteenth as an intelligence officer. Lieutenant Colonel Wilfred Smith was a China missionary's son and professor of Oriental history at Ohio University. He had been born and raised on the Yangtze and later commanded our entire field-intelligence net. Major Sam West spent years in the Orient as a cosmetics salesman. Corporal Sven Liljestrand was the

son of a Chengtu missionary. Lieutenant Robert Lynn had been a medical missionary in China, and Captain Harold Rosholt covered China for American newspapers before the war. All of them served for long months of combat with Chinese armies under the most primitive field conditions and came out of their experience with the greatest respect for the Chinese as fighting men. This was in marked contrast to the cynical sneering over the Chinese war effort, then the fashion among rear-echelon staff officers.

John Birch was the pioneer of our field-intelligence net. Until the Doolittle raiders began dropping out of the dark China night, Birch was organizing a new chain of missions in Chekiang Province to replace those lost when the Japanese interned Americans in Hangchow. By the time Birch was rounding up the Doolittle raiders, the Japanese were burning his new mission, so John laid aside his Bible and took up the sword for the duration. For three years he worked steadily in the field with only brief respites for medical treatment. He refused all leave or temporary duty in the United States with the comment, "I'll leave China when the last Jap is gone."

Birch surveyed all the Chinese airfields in East China during early 1943 and compiled our first accurate statistics on the amount of gas available in Chinese caches scattered around these fields. To provide us with shipping intelligence, Birch passed through Japanese lines to contact Chinese guerrillas on the Yangtze and spent months with them, setting up radio stations overlooking the main river ports to give us accurate information on enemy ship movements. For more than a year after he left the area these guerrillas reported to us faithfully. While on the Yangtze, Birch discovered the Japanese were much more dependent on the Shihweiyao iron mines and smelter than we had suspected. He sent us detailed information that enabled us to cripple the blast furnaces and docks by bombing. On this same mission Chinese guerrillas told Birch of a small city near Hankow that the Japanese were using to conceal a big munitions dump and garrison from our air attacks on Hankow. When bombers were unable to locate the target, Birch filtered back through the lines and rode in the nose of the lead B-25 to pin-point the target for the bombardier. The seemingly deserted town erupted into a volcano of smoke and fire when the first bombs hit, as the munitions exploded. Birch's guerrilla friends, watching from a nearby hill, were impressed with his performance. They later told him thirty trucks had been required to carry away the dead Japanese, and the dump was completely destroyed.

In the spring of 1944 I sent Birch into North China to establish con-



tact with the Chinese underground there to obtain target data for our proposed operations against the enemy railway system. Birch walked across the Japanese-occupied Pinghan railroad line in an interval between two large enemy armies marching down the railroad bed to join the East China offensive. Again it was Birch who gave us our first word of these reinforcements, the first to evade our air attacks by avoiding the Yangtze. Birch contacted a large Chinese army cut off by the Japanese thrust down the railroad and put them to work building an airfield behind the Japanese lines to move in his radio equipment and also allow their first pay in six months to be flown in by Fourteenth Air Force B-25's. Summer floods wiped out the field, but Birch had three others built, large enough to be used for refueling fighters on long-range missions deep into North China. Our fighters used this Japanese-surrounded field for many months, making surprise penetrations to areas the enemy never suspected were vulnerable to fighter strikes and hitting the Japanese as far north as the Great Wall. Birch also shipped portable radios deep into enemy territory and provided a steady flow of target data and weather information for operations as far north as Manchuria.

When Fourteenth Air Force radio teams were transferred to the Office of Strategic Services, Birch radioed to me, "When do I return to Air Force stop Would rather be a private in the 14th than colonel in OSS."

It was while pressing north from his northern base of operations to reach Allied personnel in a Japanese prison camp that Birch was shot and killed by Chinese Communist troops near Hsuehchow. He died exactly ten days after the Japanese, whom he had fought so long and valiantly, surrendered. What actually happened near Hsuehchow remains obscure. But if I had still been in China, there would have been a squadron of B-25's blasting that Communist position with no further questions asked.

Each one of these field-intelligence officers had a story better than any fiction. There was Frillman, who refused to leave the Chinese in Changteh as the Japanese threatened encirclement and calmly radioed directions for our air attacks on the Japanese closing in on him. He later filtered through the Jap siege of Changteh at night and escaped only after a running fight with an enemy patrol. West, with his radio station under constant Japanese mortar and artillery fire, kept the enemy stalled on a river bank for thirty days at our Paoching airfield. Every time the Japanese attempted a crossing West called up

the Fifth Fighter Group of the Chinese-American Composite Wing and directed their strafing and bombing attacks until the Japs gave up. Private John Shimondle and Corporal Liljestrand operated a radio on Yoloshan opposite Changsha long after it was surrounded and directed P-40's against the Japanese attackers until only a few hours before the Chinese strong point fell.

The work of these field-intelligence men proved beyond all shadow of doubt that it was possible for Americans and Chinese to work together in the field even under the worst possible conditions. It took intelligence and understanding on both sides to make this work truly effective.

One of the Chinese commanders who exhibited both these qualities plus the fighting tenacity of a bulldog was Marshal Hsueh Yo, commander of the Ninth War Area. Hsueh was one of the toughest field commanders in the Chinese Army although he neither looked nor acted the part. Short and slim, Hsueh was almost engulfed by the long black hip boots he liked to wear. He was so soft-spoken and had such complete command of the intricacies of Chinese courtesy that he seemed more like a scholar than the *"Tiger of Changsha"* and the architect of some of China's bloodiest victories. Underneath, his core was hard and sharp.

At an age when most American professional soldiers are still cheering West Point football games, Hsueh commanded a division in the famous northern expedition of the Kuomintang that set the seal of the Generalissimo's leadership on China. Hsueh's reward was the governorship of Hunan Province, China's richest rice bowl. In Hunan, defending his capital, Changsha, he won three smashing victories over the Japanese. Each time the Japanese columns poured south from Yochow, their main advance base on the shores of Tungting Lake, Hsueh offered only token frontal resistance. He allowed the Japanese serpent to slither along his flanks to the gates of Changsha. There the dug-in defenders held fast while Hsueh threw his main strength on the Japanese flank and rear to produce a battle of envelopment and annihilation. He had no tanks or cavalry to make these swift encircling movements, only the bare feet of his sturdy Hunan farm boys. Yet three times he closed the jaws of this trap and three times cut strong Jap forces to shreds. Japanese intelligence reports rated Hsueh as the most capable war-area commander in China. The three campaigns he and his men fought with the Fourteenth Air Force certainly confirmed the enemy's judgment.

Hsueh was important to the Fourteenth because his were the armies that lay astride the Siang Valley south of Hankow, blocking the

enemy's most likely approach to our chain of vital eastern air bases. Hsueh was receptive to our liaison from the first.

During the course of two years of almost constant fighting our friendship ripened via radio and battle reports. Because of the difference in our size, Hsueh and I were known in our radio codes as the little and big tiger respectively. In the midst of all his troubles Hsueh found time to send me shipments of choice Hunan mushrooms for my table, and I sent him occasional gifts of Kentucky bourbon and American cigarettes to enliven his staff meetings. Hsueh preferred the more potent corn whisky to the milder Chinese rice wine, because it gave him more opportunity to demonstrate his prowess in the bottoms-up sessions that mark most formal Chinese dinners. Two of my most prized trophies came from Hsueh—a Japanese commander's samurai sword and a Jap helmet punctured by .50-caliber bullets from a P-40, both from the ruins of Changteh.

The Ninth War Area armies of Hsueh were typical of the condition of Chinese armies facing the Japanese after long years of battle on short supply. Soldiers were mostly farm boys, barefooted and clad in cotton quilting during winter and flimsy cheesecloth in the summer. They lived on rice and occasional greens and were badly undernourished, making them easy prey to malaria, jaundice, scurvy, dysentery, and cholera. Field kitchens were black iron kettles slung on bamboo poles. When they went into battle, they lived on a small sack of dried rice slung over their shoulder like a long Bologna.

Their arms were Chinese-manufactured rifles with barrel grooves worn smooth from long usage and homemade ammunition that misfired as often as not. They had some foreign machine guns, Japanese mortars, and a few French and Russian cannon with limited stocks of shells. The armies moved at the pace of a coolie's trot. Supplies followed at the same pace, bobbing along on the end of carrying poles of barefooted brown coolies, who were one notch farther down the Chinese social scale than even the lowly soldiers.

Lack of communications hampered all movements in the confusion of battle. Most of the armies depended on commercial telephones and telegraph for their orders and reports. After the spring fighting around Ichang, Hsueh was so impressed with American radio communications that he personally bought thirty Chinese radio sets for his advance units to keep in constant touch with our radio teams. Unfortunately the Chinese sets broke down in the middle of the Changteh campaign and were of little use. After Changteh, Hsueh tried to buy fifty American V-100 sets at any price. All our efforts to supply these radios for

campaign were strangled by red tape in C.B.I. Theater headquarters.

There were no medical facilities with the armies. Most of the seriously wounded died from lack of treatment. At Changteh when the Japanese used irritant gas, the Chinese troops pulled cotton padding from their uniforms, urinated on it, and pressed it to their noses. It was their only protection and roughly similar to the methods used by the Canadians at Ypres in 1915 against the first poison-gas attacks in military history.

Badly equipped, underfed, and often poorly led, the Chinese soldiers seldom lost their spirit. They fought again and again and in victory or defeat seldom faltered. Their combat losses were enormous. Disease took an even heavier toll. Human losses could be replaced more easily than equipment. After the end of months of hard fighting, Hsueh had one army of 14,000 men with only 2,000 rifles. It was not uncommon to see Chinese troops marching to the front with only one rifle for every two or three men. Those without arms were expected to pick them off the battlefield dead of either side.

Not all Chinese commanders were of Hsueh Yo's caliber, and not all their armies fought as well or as often as he did. Most of the armies of Free China had enough arms and ammunition to fight one pitched battle or a maximum of thirty days' combat operations. Their commanders were naturally reluctant to fight that battle without assurance of replacements for their expended equipment. Marshal Ku Chu Tung in the coastal provinces and Lung Yun in Yunnan had two of the best-equipped armies in Free China, but both refused to commit them to battle unless Chungking assured them of replacement supplies.

However, Hsueh Yo never let these practical considerations hamper his fight against the Japanese. After the battle of Changteh he estimated that it would take six months to re-equip his armies. Within five months the Japanese were back at his throat with larger forces than ever before, and Hsueh had received none of the supplies he needed. By the end of 1944 he had been whittled down to less than one third of his original strength, but he was still fighting. Hsueh and his armies were continued proof of the falsity of Stilwell's claim that the Chinese would not fight except under American command. After watching both in action against the same enemy for three years, I would rate Hsueh above Stilwell as both strategist and field commander.

The battle of Changteh offered first concrete proof that the combination of well-directed American air support and Chinese ground forces could stop the Japanese. The enemy poured about 40,000 Japanese

troops aided by another 20,000 Koreans, Mongol cavalry, and Chinese puppet troops down the west shores of Tungting Lake. They drove 200 miles to Changteh, where they attempted to establish an advanced airfield and a base for eventual flanking attack on Changsha. In a three-month campaign the Japanese took Changteh. But in the face of heavy air attacks and Chinese counterattacks they were unable to hold it for more than five days.

Four fighter squadrons and two B-25 squadrons bombed Changteh to rubble and paved the way for Chinese counterattacks that recaptured the city. The Japanese Air Force tried for two days to dispute our air supremacy over Changteh. Despite the first appearance of large quantities of the new Tojo fighter, they were unable to interfere seriously with our attacks and stopped trying. Bombing and strafing attacks prodded the Japs' retreat, as they streamed north along roads and rivers, and boosted their casualties for the campaign to about 15,000 men, of which half were killed by planes. Paul Frillman, returning to Changteh with the Chinese armies, reported evidence of heavy fighting in and around the city, with the Japanese abandoning much equipment and many documents. Frillman reported large quantities of Chinese and Japanese bodies strewn through the charred ruins and rotting on the hillsides where isolated Chinese units fought to the last man. By the end of December the Japanese had been pushed back to their original positions. It was evident to all concerned that only an all-out Japanese ground offensive could dislodge the Fourteenth Air Force from its eastern bases. As the year ended there were indications that the enemy was preparing for a real showdown in East China.

The end of the year also saw our campaign against Japanese shipping gather momentum. During the early fall "Casey" Vincent set up a target of logs at Kweilin about the size of a heavily loaded ship in the water and set both fighter and bomber pilots to practicing the skip-bombing tactics that had proved so successful against Japanese shipping in the southwest Pacific. The battle of Changteh delayed our application of these borrowed tactics until the end of the good weather in East China. Despite the handicap of foul weather our shipping strikes began to rise sharply.

It was impossible to overestimate the importance of shipping to the Japanese Empire. As the postwar U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey pointed out, it was the most vulnerable feature in the Japanese defenses. As early as the end of 1942 Japanese shipping losses were exceeding replacements. During 1943 the shipping crisis began to get serious.

Chemnault at his slit-trench command post during a Japanese air attack on Kunming.





Skip-bombing attack blasts a railroad bridge in French Indo-China

It was surprising how so many top Allied strategists overlooked the real significance of this Japanese Achilles' heel. For example, when General Arnold's Twentieth Air Force began operations against Japan in the middle of 1944, they selected coke and steel furnaces as their prime targets. But by that time shipping losses had already cut steel production by two thirds due to critically reduced imports. By March of 1945 the coal and iron-ore imports absolutely necessary to keep the steel industry going had completely stopped because of shipping losses and the need to divert what little shipping remained to carrying rice to prevent starvation in Japan. It may have seemed silly to the Twentieth Air Force planners that shipping losses could throttle the Japanese steel industry more effectively than destruction of some key processing plants, but that is exactly what happened. This same process was repeated in almost every vital Japanese industry. Oil imports from the Dutch East Indies began declining as early as 1943 and were critically short by 1944, even though bombing of the Indies had just begun. Oil imports ended completely by April of 1945, almost four months before the end of the war. As the Strategic Bombing Survey pointed out, Japan was mortally wounded by mid-1944 through shipping losses alone, and by August of 1945 destruction of shipping had reduced Japan's war production to 50 per cent below its wartime peak.

It is interesting to note that the shrewd gentlemen of the Strategic Bombing Survey concluded that the first B-29 missions could have been expended more effectively if they had used their extremely long range to spot shipping targets for submarine attacks rather than in sporadic direct bombing of the Japanese steel mills, aircraft factories, and other so-called strategic targets. This is of course heresy to the "bomber radicals," but it marked the difference between genuine and spurious strategy in the war against Japan. Against Russia, for example, a tremendous land power, some other Achilles' heel would have to be found.

Next to maintaining air superiority over China, which was a prerequisite for any operation, Japanese shipping remained the primary target of the Fourteenth Air Force throughout the war. Even the great Japanese offensive in East China during the summer of 1944 diverted us from that goal only momentarily.

From our China bases we flanked two of Japan's critical watery arteries through which economic lifeblood flowed to the Empire—first, the Yangtze, key to all Japanese supply in China; and second, the Formosa Straits and South China Sea, through which raw materials of the conquered territories flowed to Japan. Two prime sources of



high-grade iron ore, Shihweiyao on the Yangtze and Hainan Island, were within range of our fighters and medium bombers. Fighters and cannon-carrying B-25's swept the Yangtze from Nanking to Ichang, destroying shipping from sampans to ocean-going freighters. The Yangtze was mined with sonic, magnetic, and floating mines until the river was closed to metal ships above Nanking. Two B-25 squadrons in East China, by refueling at Suichwan, could sweep across the Formosa Straits and far out into the South China Sea, skip-bombing the tankers and freighters carrying oil, bauxite, coal, lead, manganese, and rice to Japan. One detachment of the 308th was based at Kweilin and Liuchow to fly long-range sea search missions as far as the Philippines and locate shipping for Navy submarine strikes. These Liberators knocked out enemy radar stations in the Pescadores and Pratas Island, dueled with four-engine Japanese flying boats on antisubmarine patrol off Formosa, and mined the harbors of Formosa and the China coast. Entire 308th Group strength was thrown against the Hong Kong-Canton port areas. B-25's from Yunnan bases swept the Tonkin Gulf and pounded the Hainan iron-loading ports at Bakli and Samah Bay. Despite increasingly bad weather we struck 78,000 tons of enemy shipping in January of 1944 and certainly sank 56,900 tons. In February we hit 100,000 tons and sank 65,000 tons. This was at a time when total Japanese shipping losses in the Pacific were averaging 175,000 tons a month. With our tiny force we were accounting for nearly one third of the total bag of Japanese shipping.

I was so optimistic over these dividends on our minute investment that I wrote the President again and boosted my promise of Trident. I assured him that if we ever actually received our long-promised 10,000 Hump tons per month, I would now guarantee we would sink between 175,000 and 200,000 tons a month instead of the 150,000 tons I had promised in Washington.

He answered, "I agree with the importance of the plan against shipping as part of the effective flank attack on Japan from China. Your figures on results of operations against Japanese shipping are excellent. You are the doctor and I approve your treatment."

Despite all our difficulties, by the end of 1943 the Fourteenth Air Force was firmly fixed in its strategic position and ready to play its assigned role in the over-all Pacific offensive. There was no more striking demonstration of the China-based air force's capabilities than the work of the 21st Photo-Reconnaissance Squadron during this period. From its crude beginnings with a single P-40B and a borrowed R.A.F. aerial camera our photo reconnaissance grew to be an important

factor in the Pacific war. Using specially equipped P-38 planes and their own newly developed methods of stretching range by careful control of gas consumption, pilots of the 21st Squadron ranged over enemy territory from Manchuria to Saigon. Operating from our East China fields, these pilots were the first American airmen to fly over Japan since the Doolittle raid in 1942 and were the first Americans to penetrate the air over the Philippines since the fall of Corregidor. By the end of 1943 they had photographed Manila and all of northern Luzon, provided detailed photomosaics of Manchurian industrial areas, and brought back the first target pictures of major enemy aircraft plants on the island of Kyushu in Japan. They also provided complete photo cover of the island stronghold of Formosa and kept me constantly informed on enemy air strength at all fields within our range. The detailed intelligence from their photos provided data for the first strikes by General George Kenney's planes on Manila, for the first B-29 raids on Japan and Manchuria, and for Navy carrier strikes on Formosa, the Philippines, and French Indo-China.

These concrete achievements of our photo planes during a period when other Allied planes were still a year away from these vital enemy areas were ample proof of what could have been done from our East China bases on a larger scale by our bombers, given sufficient supplies. Our eastern fields were fully equipped for regular operations. We had air superiority over China's sky. Our liaison with Chinese ground armies and field-intelligence sources was well developed and shipping-attack techniques had been polished to a point where they were paying large dividends on our small investment.

Our biggest remaining problem was, as always, to get a major share of Hump tonnage delivered to China for our combat operations and to fight against the eternal pressure to dissipate this vital tonnage among the traditional Army overhead of parasitic service organizations, which always seemed to consume more supplies than they distributed.

As the spring of 1944 approached, the Fourteenth Air Force was ready to tighten its grip on the Japanese jugular in Asia. But from both friend and foe came ominous signs of opposition.

FIRST strategic cracks in the Japanese position appeared during early 1944. Allied offensives of the 1942-43 period did not greatly disturb the enemy. Results were tiny nibbles along the Japanese perimeter at relatively high cost. They fitted the Japanese policy of fighting a long and costly holding war to pave the way for a negotiated peace that would permit Japan to retain the bulk of its conquests. However, the battle for Midway taught the Japs that their proud fleet could not roam the seas within range of American airplanes. The Pacific war settled down to a grim struggle to shove our air bases ever nearer Japan's life line to the south.

By the beginning of 1944 it was apparent to the Japanese high command that the sea barriers they counted on to hold off the American thrusts were no great hindrance to intelligently applied airpower. As airpower emerged as the key to the American drive across the Pacific, the Japanese could visualize George Kenney's planes from the southwest Pacific and Navy carrier strikes meeting my China-based bombers over the South China Sea and squeezing the Japanese life line in a vise of air blockade. To meet this threat the enemy planned to substitute a land line of communications running the length of Asia for the increasingly vulnerable sea lane through the Formosa Straits and South China Sea. As 1944 began, the Japanese were marshaling all their strength on the Asiatic continent for their largest land offensive of the Pacific war. More than a million and a half troops were involved in the strategy that aimed at securing the land line of communications, driving American airpower from its strategic position in China, thus removing the anvil against which the Pacific hammer would smash, and bringing about the long-sought final collapse of China.

Stilwell always maintained that it was Fourteenth Air Force attacks that generated this tremendous Japanese offensive. Testimony of Japanese leaders after the war indicated that he was wrong in this assumption.

tion. Lieutenant General Takahashi, Japanese chief of staff in China, told postwar American interrogators that the Japanese could not have afforded to mount such a costly offense merely to clear our air force out of East China. The East China campaign was planned only after the American advance through the Pacific indicated the eventual possibility of establishing an air blockade of the Japanese vital sea lanes and later an American landing on the China coast. It was part of a revised over-all Japanese strategy necessitated by the enemy's decisive defeats in the central and southwest Pacific.

The Japanese had good plans—as good as any war plans could be without the vital ingredient of airpower. For even then the Japanese high command had lost faith in its air forces and planned its campaigns to compensate for Allied superiority in the air. First objective of the 1944 Asiatic offensive was to burst out of northern Burma into India, slashing the supply arteries that fed the Assam Hump bases and cutting off the last source of supply for Chinese armies and the Fourteenth Air Force. With the Assam air bases cut off from the rest of India, China would surely collapse and our air effort evaporate.

Second objective was to poke a finger through the heart of central and southwest China, clearing the Chinese armies from the only north-south railroad in China and rolling up the chain of air bases that menaced shipping off the China coast. From these bases, air support could be given to any landing that might be made on the South China coast. This campaign was planned in three phases. First was a drive from the Yellow River through Honan Province to clear the Peiping-Hankow (Pinghan) railroad and provided a shorter and less vulnerable route for troops to move from Manchuria and North China into the Hankow bulge from which the main attack was scheduled.

While a half million men poured out of the Hankow bulge down the Canton-Hankow roadbed from the north, another force was scheduled to push up from Canton in the south to seize our East China bases in a lobster-claw pincers. By massing overwhelming force, the Japanese counted on a swift and decisive three-month campaign to clear East China by mid-summer. This would leave them free to meet any threats from the Pacific with their rear completely cleared. The north-south line of communications could move troops to threatened areas along the coast and carry strategic raw materials from southeast Asia to the factories of Japan. With the Hankow-Canton railway in operation and the ports of Canton and Hong Kong in their possession, the Japs could shift troops from China to the Philippines within forty-eight hours. With a land corridor carved from Manchuria to Malaya, vital sea links

would be reduced to the narrow Tsushima Straits between Korea and Japan and the short haul from the East Indies to Singapore.

Preparations for an effort of that magnitude were impossible to conceal. Thanks to our former missionary intelligence officers in the field, Japanese operations came as no surprise to the Fourteenth. The Fourteenth weekly intelligence summary noted preparations for the offensives as early as January 27, 1944, reporting, "There are reported preparations for enemy drives in both north and south China. In the area of the Yellow River bend the Japanese are accumulating forces for a drive on Chengchow."

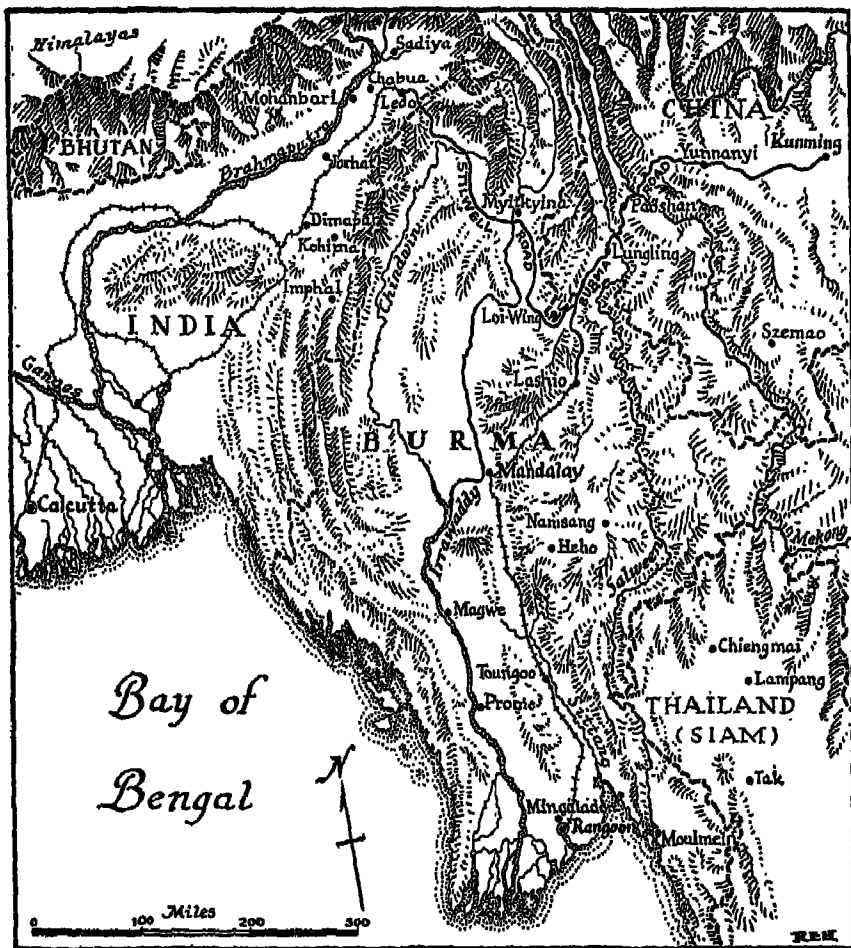
Chengchow was the first Chinese-held junction on the Pinghan Railroad in Honan. First evidence of heavy troop movements up the Yangtze into the Hankow bulge was reported on February 10, and thereafter a steady stream of intelligence detailed the enemy's plans as he moved his pieces into position on the China chessboard. Japanese strength in the Yangtze Valley mounted from 3½ divisions in the summer of 1943 to 14 divisions in the spring of 1944. "Casey" Vincent's command in the east began bombing transports and troop-staging areas along the Yangtze during February. By mid-March we moved a photo-reconnaissance flight of P-38's north of Chungking to keep the Japanese along the Yellow River under surveillance. Enemy air strength steadily increased both in the Yellow River area and at Hankow. On March 15 a Japanese prisoner of war spilled plans for the drive south from Hankow. Jap-held portions of the Pinghan Railroad were closed to all but military traffic by the end of March.

While the Japanese concentrated their resources for a well-coordinated major effort in Asia, the United States dissipated its meager resources in the China-Burma-India Theater among three widely separated and strategically unco-ordinated projects: first—the northern Burma campaign to open a road to China; second—the Matterhorn project to begin bombing Japan with Boeing B-29 Superfortresses from China bases; and third—the antishipping campaign of the Fourteenth Air Force.

Ever since Stilwell trudged out of Burma in the spring of 1942, he had burned with a consuming desire to march back at the head of a victorious army that would wipe out the stain of his humiliating defeat. The Burma campaign became an obsession with Stilwell, which he pursued relentlessly without any regard for reality. Stilwell's first attempt to mount a Burma offensive was made in the fall of 1942 when the last stragglers of his Chinese armies were still trapped in the Naga Hills and he had absolutely no forces fit to fight. He tried again in the

spring of 1943 despite the fact that his India-based Chinese divisions had not finished training, and the Chinese armies on the Salween were neither trained nor equipped for an offensive. Both of these attempted offensives were vetoed by the Generalissimo. The Generalissimo's position on a Burma campaign was quite clear, and it never changed. He favored an all-out attempt to retake Burma that offered swift returns on his military investment. These plans called for British landings in southern Burma to cut the Japanese supply lines, American airpower, and Chinese troops in India and along the Salween. He was irrevocably opposed to a limited offensive supported by the Chinese alone, which promised small and distant returns on a relatively large investment of China's already strained military resources.

At Trident Stilwell was again thwarted on his Burma plans when the Combined Chiefs of Staff supported a China air offensive instead. At Quadrant the British agreed to an all-out Burma campaign including amphibious landings at Rangoon and an airborne landing by Wingate's Raiders in northern Burma to support Stilwell's Chinese divisions. The U.S. promised three divisions of American troops to strengthen Stilwell's force, and the Generalissimo agreed to throw in his Salween armies. These plans were scrapped when the British begged off on the Rangoon operation, pleading shortage of landing craft. At Sextant the plans were revived with a British landing in the Andaman Islands substituted for the Rangoon operation. The Andamans were closer to Singapore, which was as much an obsession with the British as northern Burma was with Stilwell. These plans crumbled when the British again ducked their assault and the United States welched on its promise to furnish three divisions. Instead of 30,000 American combat troops Stilwell got the 3,000 volunteers later known as Merrill's Marauders. The Generalissimo took the British and U.S. failures as relief from his promise. As a result of his disappointment he informed Stilwell that he would withdraw the Chinese divisions on the Salween front. However, he allowed Stilwell to retain command of the Chinese troops in India for whatever purpose he chose to use them. Stilwell, understandably angry over the repeated planning failures, jumped off with his Chinese divisions from Ledo in November of 1943. By January of 1944 the Chinese and Merrill's Marauders were fighting down the Hukwang Valley toward Myit-kyina with the Ledo Road unwinding behind them. It struck me then as curious that Stilwell, who told the Combined Chiefs of Staff he needed fifty divisions to defend American airfields in East China, set out to conquer Burma with only two and a half divisions.



This road served as the military excuse for Stilwell's Burma campaign. Any realistic appraisal of its logistical value would have revealed it for the worthless boondoggle it was.

By May 1945, four months after the Stilwell Road opened, it delivered only 6,000 tons of cargo monthly to China. A.T.C. was then delivering 70,000 tons a month over the Hump using 600 planes and a score of airfields. In a single day—August 1, 1945—A.T.C. delivered 5,327 tons of cargo to China—nearly equaling the monthly total of the Stilwell Road. Fearful of another Alaskan Highway scandal, the War Department radioed C.B.I. Theater headquarters that "the Stilwell Road must be presented as a success." Theater headquarters obligingly added the weight of trucks, trailers, and personnel moving over the road but even then total tonnage did not surpass 25,000 tons a month. Even that record was possible only while delivering new trucks to China. The road was equipped solely for one-way traffic. Trucks were the only available cargo carriers. China had fuel to support only 10,000 new trucks. After these were delivered, operators of the road faced the alternative of ending operations and admitting that the road was a failure or continuing meager tonnage deliveries and leaving an ever increasing quantity of idle trucks to rust in China. The latter policy was followed, and at the end of the war the Kunming area was jammed with vast parks of surplus trucks, another monument to the incredible folly of the Stilwell Road. Of more use was the pipe line that followed the road and carried gas and oil to China. Yet when the pipe line was first proposed Stilwell rejected it with the comment, "I don't want any damned pipe lines. All I want is bullets—just bullets."

The pipe line was finally added over Stilwell's protest at the insistence of General Brehon Somervell, chief of S.O.S. Without the pipe line the Stilwell Road would have delivered less than a single air-transport group on the Hump.

This was the goal for which Stilwell poured 90 per cent of the Allied resources in the C.B.I. into the Burma rathole along with some two hundred million dollars, the direct cost of the road, and a large quantity of British, Chinese, and American blood.

Stilwell always professed to be fearful of Japanese retaliation for American air attacks in East China, but he appeared singularly indifferent to any Japanese reaction his northern Burma thrust might provoke. The Japanese left only small forces to fight delaying actions against Stilwell and in March hurled their main forces across the "impassable" Chin Hills into India in a drive to slice all communica-



tions with Assam. The Japanese attack caught both the British and Stilwell by complete surprise. Within three weeks a debacle to match their 1942 rout was in the making. Only the surrounded British garrison at Imphal held while the Japanese swept on to within twenty miles of the Assam-Bengal railroad. On the verge of isolating Stilwell in the jungle, the enemy also came within an ace of choking off the last supply line to China. For weeks the entire Assam base was in danger.

Only swift and drastic mobilization of Allied airpower saved the day. Transports were diverted from the Hump to rush the Fifth Indian division to relieve Imphal and keep the defenders supplied in the face of the Japanese siege. The entire capacity of the Assam-Bengal railroad was required to move troops and supplies into position for the British counterattack that finally drove the enemy back into Burma. While this was going on, Hump tonnage to China sagged by 40 per cent. Had the Japs chosen to drive straight north up the Chindwin River instead of trying to bite off all of Assam, Stilwell's forces would have been irretrievably trapped between Ledo and Myitkyina. Fortunately, and unexpectedly, the Japanese high command chose to fight for "all or nothing" and drove westward for Assam instead of north for the crossings of the upper Chindwin.

The second drain on China supplies came from the Salween campaign, planned as the other half of Stilwell's pincers against northern Burma. As the Japanese threat developed in East China, the Generalissimo became increasingly reluctant to commit the Yoke forces in Yunnan, well equipped with American arms and ammunition, to the Salween offensive. If Stilwell chose to make a foolhardy drive into Burma with the Chinese divisions under his command, the Generalissimo planned no interference. But when it came to the Salween, he was more concerned over the fate of East China.

The Burma venture had already stripped many of China's remaining defenses, and the Generalissimo had a long memory. In 1942 he lost two armies in Burma under Stilwell's command and all his motorized heavy artillery. In 1943 more than a hundred thousand Chinese troops were flown from China to India to Stilwell's Ramgarh training camp. When the Japanese threat in China developed, the only well-equipped armies in China were the Yoke forces on the Salween. To prevent complete failure of his northern Burma campaign Stilwell had to bludgeon the Generalissimo into the Salween offensive. Here again Stilwell used his control over American lend-lease supplies as a club to beat the Generalissimo into submission. When the Gen-

oralissimo held firm against the Salween venture in April, Stilwell abruptly shut off all Hump supplies to Chinese agencies and turned them over to the Fourteenth.

Stilwell's headquarters in Chungking radioed me, "Good news comes to Chennault for his eyes alone stop Since Gmo won't fight despite all our efforts all remaining tonnage allocated to Chinese agencies for April will be allotted to 14th Air Force except those necessary for your supply lines and a few tons for US forces with Yoke and Zebra forces."

In May the Generalissimo reluctantly gave the green light on the Salween, and the offensive began in the midst of monsoon mud and heavy overcasts that made proper air support impossible. This was at the time Japanese were racing over the Honan plains almost as fast as tanks and trucks could carry them. Salween fighting remained bogged in the mud until the monsoon broke in October and close air support was possible. By that time two more Chinese armies had been chewed up by the few Japanese regiments entrenched on the ridges. It was necessary to fly two more Chinese armies from North China to continue the job. Hump tonnage for these operations cost better than 5,000 tons a month.

Brigadier General Frank "Pinky" Dorn was Stilwell's deputy on the Salween. Dorn was one of the "old China hands" who had served in China during the treaty-port days and later walked out of Burma with Stilwell in the disaster of 1942. Dorn blamed most of his troubles during the Salween campaign on the Chinese, although I thought him logistically naïve and completely in the dark on airpower. Dorn had the audacity to suggest to me that one of my wing commanders was mentally unsound because he refused to guarantee regular close air support for Dorn's operations during the thick rainy weather of the monsoon season when visibility was often zero.

Dorn had eighteen months to prepare for his attack but during that time neglected to prepare any workable supply plans. Two weeks before the offensive began, he suddenly realized Yoke's food and ammunition were stored at Yunnanyi and he had no way of moving them some two hundred miles to the battlefield.

Dorn's earlier plans included use of 70,000 mules. As a long-time student of Yunnan agriculture, I was aware that this demand would have paralyzed agriculture in three provinces and produced a West China famine in six months. When the Chinese tried to explain this, Dorn raised the old cry of "hoarding." Then Dorn claimed his supply problems would be solved if the Chinese simply produced all the

trucks they had been hoarding since the Burma Road closed. When Dorn did accumulate some trucks, he immediately got priority for most of the alcohol fuel being used on our line of supply to East China airfields. Diversion of this fuel to Yoke forces all but paralyzed our eastern supply line during the late spring and early summer.

Finally two weeks before the Yoke forces jumped off, Dorn tore up all his previous supply plans and demanded air supply. This cost the Fourteenth Air Force another 1,500 to 2,000 tons of Hump tonnage a month to keep a troop-carrier squadron flying for Dorn.

Burma and Salween diversions were enough to cripple the Fourteenth's supply lines, but the final blow was dealt by the Matterhorn project. Twentieth Air Force B-29 Superfortresses were one of the great weapons of the war. With proper tactics, bases, and logistical support in the Marianas they brought Japan to its knees before Stilwell could land his Tenth Army on Kyushu and begin his self-announced task of digging the Japanese out with a bayonet. But when the first B-29's came to China in the early summer of 1944, they were untried airplanes handled by green leaders and saddled with a fantastic concept of command.

The Matterhorn project was another example of the curious unilateral dealings between the American top military command and China. After Pearl Harbor, China's military mission to the United States was denied representation on the Combined Allied Chiefs of Staff although such lesser military powers as the Dutch were included. Excuse was that the Combined Chiefs of Staff operations did not extend to China. Yet in 1944 that august body extended its operations into China through the Twentieth Air Force, which reported directly to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (the American section of the Combined Chiefs of Staff) and required the Chinese to expend an enormous effort to support decisions in which the Chinese had been specifically denied a voice.

The B-29's were the last chance of the old Air Corps "bomber radicals" to prove their beloved Douhet doctrine of unescorted high-altitude daylight bombing. It had already been thoroughly discredited over Europe but the "bomber radicals" were willing to try again over Asia. To avoid any interference from dull field commanders who might be too concerned with concrete problems of the war to understand the lofty concepts the B-29's were to prove, command of the superbombers was retained by General Arnold in the Pentagon, where he could make the command decisions of the global air force unhampered by any urgencies of actual combat. It was a grandiose and

foolish concept since it has never been proved sound to fight one phase of a war without any relation to all other aspects. Neither the men, planes, tactics, nor communications systems proved equal to the task. An enormous amount of time and materiel and many lives were wasted.

After the war, the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey concluded that the China-based B-29 operations "did not warrant diversion of the effort entailed and that the aviation gas and supplies used by the B-29's might have been more profitably allocated to expansion of tactical and shipping operations of the 14th Air Force." It noted that the eight hundred tons of bombs dropped by China-based B-29's were of "insufficient weight and accuracy to produce significant results."

The global Twentieth Air Force was a creation of the Pentagon planners, and they were rewarded with the first command plums—Brigadier General K. B. Wolfe of the C.B.I. B-29's and my old friend "Possum" Hansell of the Mariana-based superbombers. Coming to bat against Japan, they both struck out with a loud swish of their brief cases, leaving Major General Curtis Emerson LeMay to pick up the pieces and put the B-29's on a paying basis. LeMay was a combat-hardened veteran of the European air war who dropped the global-air-force theories and tactics out the bomb bay and guided the Superforts to one of the most amazing performances in the history of warfare.

K. B. Wolfe brought the first B-29's to China with overoptimistic estimates of their performance and only the foggiest notions of Asiatic geography. Two of his first three target selections—Tokyo and Osaka—were beyond the range of Chengtu-based B-29's. I urged Wolfe to use our eastern fields of Suichwan, Hsincheng, and Liuchow, from which he could reach Tokyo for diversionary operations to confuse Japanese defenses. But he preferred to use Chengtu as a fixed base from which to direct his bomber streams at Japan. The Japanese then had seven hundred aircraft, most of them fighters, in North China, and I expected them to cause trouble for the B-29's by setting up a fighter gantlet through which the heavily laden bombers would have to pass on their long slow climb out of Chengtu to 30,000 feet. Instead the Japanese chose to defend only target areas and make desultory night raids on Chengtu in the wake of returning bombers. With the fighters then available to the Japanese in North China, I could have thrown up a fighter belt that would have caught the B-29's coming and going and soon made their losses prohibitive. As a result I pre-

pared the eastern fields for B-29's, against the day when Wolfe might find he needed them urgently.

From the first I argued with Wolfe and later with LeMay about targets and tactics, urging them to use incendiaries on the Japanese cities instead of the high explosives they specified. My pleas were to hit targets affecting shipping, where the Japanese were already on the verge of a critical shortage, rather than the steel and coke plants the Washington bosses fancied. Inroads on steel production might not have been seriously felt for as long as two years.

All these were minor irritations compared with the Twentieth Air Force's supply antics. I raised the supply question to both President Roosevelt and General Arnold before Matterhorn got under way.

Arnold was quite specific, "Matterhorn is planned as a self-sustained operation and will not constitute a drain on Chennault's or Stilwell's tonnage allocations."

The theory was that the Twentieth Air Force would fly its own supplies from Calcutta to Chengtu, putting no additional load on either the Assam supply line or the Hump air lift. Like so many of their plans it didn't work out in practice. They soon discovered the B-29 was most efficient at carrying bombs. Its use as a transport was most unsatisfactory. Some were converted into gas tankers and did a better job. But the Twentieth found most of its supplies had to be hauled by the A.T.C. work horse, the C-46, practically all of it from Assam bases and some of it across the Hump to Chengtu via Kunming. All this was a sickening drain on our gas reserves in China as well as additional strain on the Assam supply line. Immediate result was another 1,500-ton drain on Fourteenth gas allocations for March and an ever increasing slice of the Hump tonnage for the Twentieth, culminating in 8,000 tons' first priority for Matterhorn by October, 1944. The Twentieth Air Force refused to face the realities of the China supply situation. Even when gas was so low at Chengtu that their defending fighters could not fly local interceptions, the Twentieth refused to live off the land and operate on skeleton tables of organization. They continued to fly in thousands of tons of American food and excess personnel into China at the expense of gas and bombs. A single B-29 group in China had an intelligence headquarters as large as the A-2 section for the entire Fourteenth Air Force. They always retained indelible recollections of the Pentagon standard of comfort.

To defend the B-29 bases at Chengtu, the Fourteenth was saddled with six squadrons of Republic Thunderbolts (P-47). This was at a

time when we were successfully defending the much more vulnerable base at Kunming with a single P-40 squadron and holding the entire East China line with four fighter squadrons. The Joint Chiefs of Staff specified that these Thunderbolt squadrons were to be used only in defense of Chengtu. The Thunderbolt burned 50 per cent more gas than the North American Mustang (P-51). Why these gas burners were assigned to China and Mustangs to India I never was able to determine. I made an immediate request to trade the Thunderbolts for P-51 groups already in the Tenth Air Force, where they had plenty of gas. This exchange would have cut gas needed just to keep up pilot proficiency from 1,100 to 650 tons a month in Hump tonnage. Not until October was the swap effected, and by that time 2,700 more Hump tons had been irrecoverably lost.

As in the case of Yoke forces, all Twentieth Air Force emergencies were met out of Fourteenth Air Force tonnage. Since the Fourteenth had the only gas reserves in China, every high-priority mission authorized by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Stilwell dipped into our reserves freely. We were compensated by an increased allocation of Hump tonnage that was worthless since there were no gas reserves in Assam to draw from. These compensatory allocations were checks drawn on an account with no funds. Matterhorn and Yoke got the gas, and the Fourteenth got rubber checks. But, according to C.B.I. headquarters' books, the Fourteenth was adequately compensated.

About the time Matterhorn was making its heaviest inroads into Fourteenth supplies the Joint Chiefs of Staff again became aware of the strategic possibilities of a China-based air force as a flank of the over-all Pacific strategy. We were requested to begin stock-piling gas and other supplies in April to fly special missions in support of operations from the Pacific. My only answer was, "Stock-pile what gas?" As a result of my inability to stock-pile nonexistent gas, I received the second "administrative" reprimand from Stilwell's headquarters. Administrative reprimands permit no review or defense.

While the Japanese were setting the stage for their biggest effort of the war in China, the Fourteenth Air Force was shunted steadily down a sidetrack that left it with only a fraction of the supplies required for survival.

A.T.C.'s lift over the Hump reached a record 13,000 tons in January 1944. We had sharp words with them over the Fourteenth's 7,130-ton share. In their enthusiasm to set a record, A.T.C. sent us enough 1,000-pound bombs to last two years while neglecting many of the critical items we specified. Bombs were easy to load and unload and

ideal cargo for record setting. In addition to a gas shortage the Fourteenth PX supplies were sacrificed to the record. This made my men a little bitter when A.T.C. received a Presidential Unit citation for their work. Colonel Gene Beebe flew a 308th B-24 to Assam to get our PX allotment.

There was always enough total Hump delivery to supply more than the Fourteenth's needs during 1944. Ironically the major Hump expansion was originally made to benefit the Fourteenth. But as the Hump began to pay off, we received an increasingly smaller share of its capacity. In February we were down to 6,844 tons, and in March our worst cut resulted in only 4,735 tons for this critical month. Despite Stilwell's shift of Chinese tonnage to us in April, we hovered dangerously close to our March tonnage. These were the critical months for our supply situation. I estimated the Japanese would jump off from the Yellow River about May 1, with their major effort from Hankow scheduled for July 1 when the good weather broke in East China. To build up East China reserves for the summer we had to put them into the supply pipe line in the spring. As time ran out, the cost of stopping the Japanese effort increased geometrically. Whereas increase of 2,000 tons a month to the east for attacks on Yangtze shipping in March and April might have crippled or delayed the offensive, by May nothing short of total mobilizations of all resources in the C.B.I. offered a chance for success.

All during the spring I made vain attempts to arouse Stilwell to the dangers brewing in China. He had disappeared into the Burma jungle in November 1943 and did not emerge, except for quick trips to apply pressure on the Generalissimo, until the summer of 1944 after both Japanese offensives were well under way. He was usually inaccessible and always preoccupied with Burma problems. He maintained his main headquarters in the Burma jungle but was forward with the Chinese troops most of the time. His other headquarters were still 1,500 miles apart in Chungking and Delhi, and his air adviser (Stratemeyer) was now in Calcutta. Radio messages were batted back and forth across the Hump like badminton birds. Frequently it was necessary to obtain concurrence from all four other headquarters before the Fourteenth could take action on a matter.

My first warning of impending Japanese action was sent to Stilwell on February 12, 1944, when I still suspected the enemy's efforts would involve another, more powerful air blitz. From then on he was continuously informed on our intelligence reports and evaluations. As usual his own China headquarters intelligence was shockingly poor,

and he refused to believe mine. Until just before the second phase of the Japanese offensive in China began, Stilwell implied that I was crying "wolf."

During March Japanese preparations reached new intensity. In one three-day period our intelligence recorded twenty-two troop trains moving into the Yellow River bend. Tanks, artillery, trucks, and armored cars were photographed in that area in larger quantities than ever before in the China war. On the Yangtze each passing week brought a new record total of shipping moving upriver to Hankow. Combination of bad weather in the east and short supplies kept our bombers from more than sporadic attacks on Yangtze shipping. In Honan, only our P-38 photo planes were based far enough north to cover the Yellow River area.

By the end of March the Fourteenth's tonnage situation was so critical I sounded a general alarm to President Roosevelt, the Generalissimo, Stilwell, and Arnold. To all the message was essentially the same.

China is in mortal danger and no preparations are possible to counter the Japanese threat unless more tonnage is delivered to the air force.

To the President I added:

I wish I could tell you I have no fear of the outcome. I expect the Chinese forces to make the strongest resistance they can. We shall do our best to give them, by means of airpower, a margin over the Japanese. But owing to the concentration of our resources on fighting in Burma little has been done to strengthen the Chinese armies and for the same reason the 14th Air Force is still operating on a shoe string. If we were even a little stronger I should not be worried. Since men, equipment and supplies are still very short I can only say to you that we will fight very hard.

I am the more concerned since the shrewdest Chinese leaders I have consulted are convinced that any Japanese success within China will touch off violent new price rises and probably cause political unrest with inevitable effects on the energy of the Chinese resistance. I note a mood of discouragement among the more influential Chinese.

To the Generalissimo:

It is necessary to inform your Excellency that the combined air forces in China, excluding B-29's, may not be able to withstand



the expected Japanese air offensive and will certainly not be able to afford air support to Chinese troops over the areas and on the scale desired. Drastic measures must be taken to put the air forces on a footing to accomplish these missions. The Japanese threat is immediate and these measures must be taken without delay.

To Stilwell:

Total receipts of aviation supplies for March 4,736 tons. This is insufficient for normal operational requirements at reduced intensity and precludes any possibility of accumulating stockage levels needed for essential reserves.

Immediate effect of cutting aviation supply tonnage in April will be virtual cessation of operations against Jap shipping, airdromes, and lines of communications. All air units in China will be rendered almost inoperative.

Much more serious will be failure to accumulate reserves needed to afford air support to Chinese ground forces in anticipated campaigns in Hunan, Hupeh, Kwangsi, and Kwantung provinces. If these Jap campaigns attain their objectives security of the entire China base will in my opinion be compromised.

I feel strongly that the Generalissimo and Joint Chiefs of Staff be warned of this situation unless additional aviation tonnage can be made available. Fully realize stringency of tonnage situation and importance of supplying Burma operations and Matterhorn but stopping anticipated Jap offensives in China is so vital to future of whole military effort in this Theater that I feel impelled to place problem before you frankly.

Stilwell replied:

Until situation at Imphal clears up no possibility of improving your supply situation that I can see. Combined Chiefs of Staff will not give any priority to anticipate movements in China when they have crisis on their hands in India. You will simply have to cut your operations down to the point where you can be sure of reserves for an emergency.

Only Stilwell remained unconvinced. The Generalissimo ordered the Salween offensive scrapped in order to shift the Yoke forces to East China. This news brought Stilwell flying out of the jungle to Chungking, where he made good his threat of shutting off all American supplies to the Chinese unless the Salween attack was made.

General Arnold wrote me on April 24:

We are of the opinion that tonnage allocations to ground forces in China should be reduced and tonnage to 14th Air Force increased. However, as you know, the decision rests with the Theater Commander [Stilwell].

A month later he wrote:

Your apprehensions over the China ground situation are shared by us. We are trying to get you more supplies and have initiated action along several lines. We tried to get a firm commitment of 8,000 tons Hump tonnage but it didn't materialize. We are now trying to get airlift to China given top priority in CBI.

As Arnold pointed out, Stilwell held the purse strings, and until he took action, the Fourteenth could get no more supplies. Stilwell answered my repeated warnings on China with advice to "wait for better times" and "do the best with what you have." Along with his windfall of 1,000 tons in April, snatched from the Chinese, came a 2,000-ton cut in Hump allocations for the Fourteenth.

Stilwell's facetiousness irritated me. On April 8 I wrote him a sharp letter pointing out that his bromides on "doing the best with what we have" were not enough and that he faced the simple choice of taking decisive action to meet the impending emergency or else assuming responsibility for allowing the Japanese to overrun East China.

I wrote:

Since I am convinced that the actual security of China as a base for future military operations against Japan is now at stake, I am impelled to present a detailed exposition of the situation as I see it. . . .

The air threat is the most serious in my experience in this theater. Disposition of the enemy's ground forces is also more threatening than at any time since Pearl Harbor. Since the Japanese no longer have the men and material to spare for rice raids or training exercises, it seems to me that they must now mean business. The whole logic of their situation points to this conclusion. They must make ready for eventual abandonment of their more extended commitments in order to try to hold on an interior line. To do this they must somehow neutralize the Allied China base on their flank and protect Formosa, the key to their inner defenses. The urgency of doing this has been immeasurably increased by the prospect of B-29 operations against Formosa and the Japanese Islands, which alone would be sufficient to provoke a violent reaction.

It seems certain that if the Japanese merely achieve initial victories, violent new price rises and political unrest may ensue further weakening Chinese resistance. If the Japanese actually attain their objectives, the economic and political results may be downright disastrous. From the strictly military standpoint success of the anticipated enemy offensives will bring neutralization of the China base perilously close, while economic and political reactions may make such neutralization an accomplished fact.

It is apparent that changing circumstances have imposed on the Fourteenth Air Force new missions vastly greater in scope than mere defense of the air transport route to India; air support of operations in Burma; and defense of the Matterhorn project.

The plain fact is that with circumstances as they now are, the combined air forces in China cannot conceivably meet these demands even by abandoning all other activities such as our fruitful anti-shipping campaign. Incoming supply tonnage is about half what we need to support our severely reduced operations and build up essential reserves. Reserve problem is critical. Authorized stockage levels for the 14th Air Force are less than 50 per cent of normal levels prescribed in other theaters. Although these authorized levels are so far below the normal, existing stockpiles at our forward bases are less than 40 per cent of the minimum specified. At these bases it has been impossible to accumulate reserves for more than a few days of intensive operations.

Four possible plans for action were recommended:

1. Restore April Hump tonnage cuts and deliver firm monthly commitments of 8,000 tons to the Fourteenth until May, increasing to 10,000 tons thereafter.
2. Give strong support to an improvement program to boost capacity of our supply line to East China by making firm Stilwell's headquarters' tentative commitment to get 500 British trucks for China immediately in exchange for future delivery of American equipment in India and giving high priority to air lift of 1,000 tons of truck engines and critical spare parts then available in India.
3. Establish reserves in India of 10 per cent of the China air strength to replace operational losses and keep the air effort in China up to its maximum level.
4. Temporarily divert Matterhorn transport capacity to building up minimum stockage levels at our East China bases and if an emergency arises to utilize part of the B-29's combat strength against key Japanese supply bases.

I concluded:

I regret the necessity of confronting you with this problem when you are so heavily engaged. But the purpose of your campaign in Burma is after all to open a better supply line to China and I believe the security of China itself to be in jeopardy. I am confident that the danger can be averted by placing the air forces in China on a sound footing. I earnestly trust you will take measures toward this end. I beg you to believe me that, in saying we do not now have a reasonable chance of success in the great tasks confronting us, I am stating a simple truth in conservative language.

Stilwell answered:

Until crisis in India passes I can see no way to improve China supply situation. There is no change in our basic directive and the Generalissimo has no right to expect 14th Air Force to do more than it can. For present we will simply have to curtail activity and do level best until times get better.

During this interchange the Japanese offensive began. Stilwell's G-2 in Chungking reported on April 10 that "Japanese do not have offensive capabilities in Yellow River area." On the night of April 16-17 the Japanese poured three divisions plus tanks and armored cars across the Yellow River and began rolling across the flat Honan wheat fields—a terrain similar to western Kansas. This was twelve days earlier than I anticipated. Added to the shock came a letter from Stratemeyer three days later (April 20), stating that Stilwell had changed primary mission of the Fourteenth to defense of the Matterhorn project at Chengtu *"even though this may place the 14th on the defensive at expense of shipping strikes and support of Chinese ground armies."*

I was stunned at this incredible order in the face of the Japanese drive into Honan that was already swelling into a force of eight divisions, slicing through Chinese defenses like a hot knife through butter. Chengtu itself was in no danger. Stilwell never grasped the point that loss of East China could also mean loss of the entire China base.

Our Kunming radio crackled to Stilwell, still deep in Burma:

I have been advised by letter from Stratemeyer that... the primary mission of the 14th Air Force is changed from defense of the Eastern Terminals of the Air Transport Route and air support of Chinese ground armies to the defense of the Chengtu area... I respectfully request reconsideration of this decision and also request clarification of the note of April 17 which states "General

Stratemeyer has authority to limit the scope of fighter operations in case of an emergency" stop

It is not clear to me just who will determine what constitutes an emergency but in any case I have certain responsibilities . . . and most sincerely trust that my hands will not be tied by requiring me to contact General Stratemeyer in the event an emergency exists stop

Such an event requires prompt action and particularly so in matters of air warfare stop These instructions create a division of responsibility which I am reluctant to believe was your intent and furthermore it is contrary to your agreement with the Chinese government with reference to command of air units in China stop

Defense of the Chengtu area gives me no concern and I must assure you that with 200 fighters such as have been provided there is no problem in that area stop Chengtu receives a two hour warning and the Chinese-American Wing is now in position east and north of Chungking stop These forces constitute an exceptionally strong outer defense of the area stop

This matter reaches me at a time when I am busily engaged in trying to stem the Japanese invasion in the Yellow River area and preparing to support both Dorn in his impending operations [Salween] and Chinese armies in Hunan stop

Defense of the Chengtu area is child's play compared to the more difficult problems that confront us stop In times like these I need your support and most of all your confidence stop I trust that I will be so honored stop

To this Stilwell replied:

Am glad to hear that the defense of Chengtu is child's play stop I gathered from your letter of April 8 that the security of China as a base for Matterhorn [B-29] and other operations against Japan might be in doubt stop It is a relief to know that we have no problem at Chengtu stop

Defense of Honan was hopeless. The armies of General Tang En Po had decayed during four years of inactivity into a poorly disciplined mob, hated as much by the Chinese peasants whose food they confiscated as the Japanese. There was no opportunity for air pressure on the enemy supply lines. Only a few squadrons of Chinese-American Wing planes could be supplied in the north, and their efforts were not effective until the offensive was well under way. Liberators of the 308th were rushed to Chengtu and flew several abortive missions to bomb the key Yellow River bridge. Chinese-American P-40's finally

knocked out several spans by dive-bombing. By that time the Japanese had several substitute spans. Until the end of the war there was a constant joust at the Yellow River crossing between the Japanese bridge builders, protected by the heaviest flak concentration in China, and the Fourteenth Air Force.

The Honan debacle was the first explosion in the political, economic, and military chain reaction that nearly brought Free China to its knees before the year's end. All of the wartime diseases that had been growing steadily worse during the long years of military stalemate and blockade now erupted to the surface like a festering boil. The warnings I had sounded the year before on the need for military action in China to avoid political and economic collapse were now coming all too true. Tragically, after two lean, near-famine years, the Honan wheat fields ripened that spring into a bumper crop that went unharvested or burned in the panic of the enemy attack.

As Japanese armor raced across the Honan plains, closing the gap in the Pinghan Railroad between the Yellow River and Hankow, I renewed my by now frantic efforts to get action out of Stilwell. Americans in Chungking still exhibited no concern over the Japanese drives. As late as May 13 after the Japanese had closed the Pinghan gap and were moving reinforcements from Manchuria to Hankow along the railroad bed, the U. S. military attaché in Chungking reported that the Honan offensive was merely spring training and Japanese troops could be expected to return to their original positions soon. He reaffirmed the statement of Stilwell's G-2 that the Japanese did not possess capabilities for large-scale offensives in China.

In desperation I sent "Buzz" Glenn to locate Stilwell and present our desperate need to him personally. "Buzz" flew to India and, after making the rounds of Stilwell's headquarters there, tracked him down to his field headquarters at Shadazup in the northern Burma jungle. Glenn flew a tiny Piper liaison plane into the crude airstrip at Shadazup only to find Stilwell deeper in the jungle at the front with his Chinese troops and a party of American newspapermen and photographers. Stilwell maintained no radio contact with his Shadazup headquarters. After waiting for days at Shadazup, Glenn returned to China without seeing or talking to Stilwell.

My final warning to Stilwell was dispatched on May 18 and did not reach him until a week later. It contained a detailed analysis of the deteriorating situation in China and pleaded for a change of the Fourteenth's mission to defense of East China. May tonnage for the Fourteenth was cut again to 5,460 tons, well below April. All during the

spring Stilwell stoutly maintained that there was nothing he could do to help the Fourteenth. However, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had given him authority to divert Matterhorn supplies, transport capacity, and combat strength to meet an emergency in the C.B.I. General Arnold made this quite clear in his letter of February 25, 1944, discussing his command of the Matterhorn project in which he said, "I recognize the right of any theater commander to call upon any force in his area to meet a critical emergency."

This was later implemented by a Joint Chiefs of Staff directive confirming this authority to Stilwell. I specifically requested Stilwell to use this authority on May 20 and begin immediate emergency procedures in China. His answer came on May 24, "Until the emergency is unmistakable, the decision will have to wait."

Two days later the Japanese struck again, unleashing their second and largest offensive from the Hankow bulge.

SPRING in East China is a season of formless gray overcast hanging low over flooded rice paddies. Lead-bellied clouds sweep across Tungting Lake, breaking into drenching rainstorms that twist up the Siang River Valley and break against the Hunan hills. Early morning mists shroud the paddy-filled valleys. Crests of surrounding hills poke up into the clouds with wisps of scud drifting at even lower levels. *Sun breaks through for only a few days at a time, but the earth gradually warms and the year's first rice crop shoots up in the oppressive, humid stickiness that heralds the blazing heat of summer.* This foul flying weather generally lasts until the end of June. When the Japanese chose to begin their main East China offensive at the end of May they deliberately selected the screen of bad weather in preference to the protection of their own air force in good weather. This timing was a genuine tribute to the Fourteenth Air Force. The scope of the enemy attack into Hunan was a tribute to the armies and strategy of Marshal Hsueh Yo.

Surging south from the Hankow bulge, the Japanese Sixth Army reached out with a seven-fingered hand to clutch at Changsha, first major objective along the road to our eastern airfields. Changsha was also the capital of the rich Hunan rice bowl and the largest single source of rice shipments in Free China. Its fall was a severe blow to Chinese stomachs. By throwing in eight divisions grouped in seven columns along a broad, 120-mile front, the Japanese were able to avoid the traditional flanking maneuvers of Hsueh Yo that had trapped them three times before at Changsha. This time it was Hsueh's men who were outflanked, outnumbered, and slaughtered.

Three previous battles for Changsha lasted months. This time Japanese patrols were sniffing at Changsha suburbs in ten days. Within two weeks the city was surrounded and under heavy siege. Opening weeks of the Hunan campaign were like a lightning game of chess



with most Chinese pieces still on the board but immobilized and helpless while Japanese strength maneuvered into position for checkmate. There was little more than skirmishing as the Japanese columns merged into three striking forces converging on Changsha. Japanese infantry and cavalry flowed around Chinese strong points always seeking the path of least resistance. Many crack enemy units were identified on the Hunan front, many of them veterans of the China fighting since 1937. Entrenched defenders of Chinese strong points were isolated and by-passed, leaving them to exhaust food and ammunition and be mopped up later. In these adroit maneuvers the enemy was aided by hundreds of Chinese traitors in plain clothes working for 8,500 Chinese dollars a day. Armed with grenades, pistols, and flares, these plain-clothes men preceded the main advance, guiding patrols over Hunan byways, scouting Chinese positions, and spreading panic in the defenders' rear. As the lightning pace of the Japanese drive became apparent, panic leaped through Hunan like an electric shock, sending floods of refugees sweeping southward up the Siang River Valley in the enemy's van.

By the time the Japanese struck with their main force in Hunan, the Fourteenth Air Force was in the position of a boxer with his left hand jabbing at one opponent, his right hand swinging at another, leaving only his head to butt his third and in this case most formidable attacker. We had reached our long-sought total plane strength of 500 with an operational strength of about 400 planes. But 200 fighters were immobilized by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to defend the Chengtu area. Another 150 planes were ordered by Stilwell to support his Salween offensive, leaving a total of 150 planes (operational strength of 90) to man the eastern bulwark. These were the old reliables of the China-based air force—the four squadrons of the 23rd Fighter Group, then commanded by Colonel "Tex" Hill, already well into his second combat tour of duty; and the 11th Bomb Squadron. I reinforced "Casey" Vincent's wing with the 491st B-25 squadron for as long as supplies were available and again used the 308th Group, based at Kunming, in heavy blows against major East China targets to back Vincent's attack. In April Kunming had been stripped bare of all supplies to build up eastern stock piles for the summer's ordeal. This amounted to fuel, bombs, and equipment for thirty days of all-out, maximum operations. After that the fate of East China loomed as a large question mark.

Weather was too bad for our bombers to fly in May and June. All Japanese squadrons at Hankow and Canton remained grounded by

weather. Japanese ground forces advanced brazenly by daylight in large masses, confident that no planes could attack them.

They failed to reckon with fighter pilots of "Tex" Hill's 23rd Group. Day after day these boys took off down muddy, puddle-spotted runways into the murderous weather. They slipped north from Hengyang, Lingling, and Kweilin, dodging up the valleys under 300- and 400-foot ceilings to catch enemy columns by complete surprise. Time and again they gunned their P-40's down the runways in driving rainstorms that almost obscured the end of the field. There were days when the weather was so bad pilots couldn't see far enough to hold regular formation. Rather than be grounded, they went out to hunt Japs in pairs and quartets. On sweeps of the broad Siang River P-40's were often forced down so low by clouds that pilots could see their prop wash kicking up spray from the water while drifting scud and rain screened both banks of the river. They roared up narrow valleys at treetop level to strafe with clouds brushing the tops of cockpit canopies. When badly hit by ground fire, pilots were so low they had to climb for enough altitude to bail out.

For weeks the Japanese clung stubbornly to their illusion that weather would screen them from air attacks. As they rushed toward Changsha, "Tex" Hill's fighters slaughtered them. Columns of from 200 to 2,000 cavalry were caught on the high open roads, hemmed in by flooded rice paddies, and cut down by the spray of bullets and fragmentation bombs from the shark-nosed fighters. The effect was as if the enemy had been ambushed by heavy machine-gun regiments and batteries of artillery. The western flank of the Japanese drive floated across Tungting Lake and up the Siang River in three-decked transports resembling Mississippi River steamboats, motorboats, and sampans. Fighters caught them on the open water with rockets, frag bombing, and strafing. Rockets and bombs tore open the big transports, spilling men, horses, and equipment into the water. Strafing blew up sampans loaded with ammunition and gas. After firing rockets and dropping bombs, P-40's came back to empty their machine guns in pass after pass at the masses of men and horses struggling in the water. The main supply artery for the eastern flank was a single highway jammed with continuous convoys of supply-laden trucks. The Lockheed Lightning (P-38) squadron based at Suichwan took these convoys as a special target. When rains softened the road, convoys bogged down in the mud, making sitting ducks for the Lightnings' 20-mm. cannon. After the first week of fighting, this road was lined with charred chassis of burned trucks.

Our radio-intelligence teams were again in the field with Hsueh Yo's armies. This time we had a dozen field teams directed from "Casoy" Vincent's Kweilin headquarters by Lieutenant Colonel Wilfred Smith. Their timely target information enabled the fighters to strike with uncanny accuracy. Many of these teams continued to operate in the Chinese front lines under enemy shellfire and mortar barrages and talked the fighters into pin-point targets to knock out specific Japanese strong points or artillery positions. Typical was the case of one radio-man retreating with the Chinese armies along the south shore of Tungting Lake. Private John Shimondle spotted a Japanese landing flotilla establishing a beachhead and radioed their position every fifteen minutes for thirty hours, never knowing whether his message had been received. It was picked up within an hour, and three P-40 missions hit the beachhead before dark, wiping out nearly 1,000 troops ashore and 150 landing boats.

For more than five weeks of "unflyable" weather the 23rd Group threw eight to ten missions a day against enemy columns and supply lines. Pilots flew three and four missions a day pausing between missions only long enough to gulp cold C-ration, hot tea, and be briefed on the next target while ground crews gassed, armed, and bombed up their planes. After the first few days, when the Japanese recovered from their surprise, ground fire was murderous. Infantry threw up massed rifle fire; columns and bivouac areas were protected by 20-mm. cannon and machine guns; and gunboats moved down Tungting Lake and the Siang River to protect the supply flotillas. We lost four squadron leaders to flak in less than a month, among them ex-A.V.G. George McMillan who had returned to China to command the 449th Fighter Squadron. Nearly half the 23rd Group pilots who began that bloody summer were killed or prisoners before fall.

Typical of these men was Captain Arthur Cruikshank, a peppery Ruston, Louisiana, boy, who flew 47 strafing missions, was shot down by ground fire twice, and shot down three Japanese in a single fight—all within three weeks. After bailing out the first time, Cruikshank landed in no-man's land and outran a Japanese patrol to Chinese lines. The second time he bailed out behind enemy lines and fell in with two Japanese plain-clothes men. While one went for help, Cruikshank killed the other with his survival-kit machete and then walked through the battle area alone for four days and nights to reach friendly territory. Here are some excerpts from his combat narratives:

Some days we had to fly two and three weather reconns before we could find a hole to get through to a target. Many times ceiling

over the target was only 100 feet. One afternoon early in June we spotted a cluster of compounds north of Changsha full of Japanese cavalry. Some were watering their horses at a small stream. Four of us went down to strafe and caught them by surprise. They didn't start to run until we opened fire. We must have killed about 300 horses and more men before we left.

Later in the day we went up the Nilo River where the Japanese were moving south. The river was full of sampans and barges loaded with troops. They had freshly cut foliage over the sampans so they were hard to spot when close inshore. We went up and down the river chewing up the boats with our guns. I could see tracers coming up from the ground and picked up some holes in my ship. Sampans were breaking up under our fire. We made three passes and when we came back again there weren't any more boats left. The water was full of bodies and debris and lots of Japs still threshing around trying to reach the banks. We got some of them on our last pass.

The next morning we started using parafrag bombs. I drew weather recon. There was heavy ground fog all the way to Changsha. I was about to turn back when I spotted a hole in the fog and saw some sampans moving up the river. I went down and strafed them before going home. By 7 A.M. we were back up on the river dropping parafrags on the sampans still moving upriver. We spotted a troop bivouac on a hill and strafed, getting about 100 troops who were apparently cooking rice. In the afternoon we went back up to the river. On the way we spotted about 300 cavalry fording a small stream. They were surprised and we got many of them.

When the Japs started coming across Tungting Lake we began running missions against shipping and along the southern shore where they were landing. We ran so many missions against those flotillas, I lost count. We hit them with parafrags, rockets, 500-pounders and machine guns. Most of the time the ceiling was too low to dive-bomb so we skipped the 500-pounders into them. Rockets knocked the big transports to pieces. We came in so low that the boatmen never heard us above the sound of their own engines. Boats were traveling so close together it was hard to miss.

I fired my rockets at a triple-decked transport on one mission. The first was a miss; my wing man told me later the second went through the middle deck. The transport mushroomed flame. Jap troops began diving into the water. My wing man strafed them. We made pass after pass over that mess of broken boats, men and horses. Many sampans were carrying gasoline. When a drum exploded it sprayed flames over the water catching men and horses and setting more boats on fire.

About the time the Japanese reached Changsha, Stilwell popped out of the Burma jungle and flew to Chungking. He ignored my radio asking to present air plans for East China to him before he saw the Generalissimo. On the afternoon of June 6 he appeared at Fourteenth Air Force headquarters on his way back from Chungking. Stilwell announced he could spare only thirty minutes to discuss East China with me and my staff.

Stilwell opened the conference with the flat statement that nothing could halt the Japanese offensive in East China. He recalled his earlier predictions of disaster at Trident and seemed reluctant to do anything that might prevent this prophecy from coming true. Despite all our entreaties, Stilwell steadfastly refused to order the total mobilization of all resources already available in the C.B.I. to meet the Japanese threat to China. This was in marked contrast to his reaction to the Japanese offensive from Burma four months earlier when his personal plans were endangered. Not until several weeks later did Stilwell's aides reveal to me that he was deliberately scuttling East China as a gambit in his personal campaign to get command of all Chinese armies.

I requested Stilwell's support on three immediate actions to begin the bolstering of East China: boosting Fourteenth Air Force Hump tonnage to 11,000 tons monthly; drastic action to increase capacity of the land supply line to East China; and one B-29 mission to flatten Hankow, key to the Japanese position in East China. Stilwell agreed only to the tonnage increase and promised tankers of the 7th Bomb Group in India to fly gas to East China. He immediately boosted Fourteenth tonnage for June to 10,000 tons, and thereafter until October there was no serious trouble on that score. However, as Stilwell's chief of staff in China, Brigadier General Tom Hearn, pointed out to me, "We realize measures taken now will not be effective until September." Yet Stilwell stubbornly refused to do anything about strengthening the land supply line to East China, without which the Hump tonnage was almost useless. Stilwell actually prohibited further shipment of trucks needed for the Kutsing-Tushan highway over the Hump and refused to cancel Yoke force priority on the alcohol fuel required to keep trucks we already had in operation. His excuse for washing his hands of the East China supply problem was that "it was strictly a Chinese matter." This was simply not true since Stilwell's own Service of Supply was supervising the supply line and both the Fourteenth Air Force and Stilwell's American Zebra forces in East China were totally dependent on it.

Worst fiasco was the proposed B-29 mission to flatten Hankow. The

Fourteenth lacked sufficient weight to deal this key enemy base the single swift crushing blow it required. I proposed to divert one B-29 mission of 100 planes against Hankow, to be followed by everything the Fourteenth could get into the air in a well-co-ordinated attack that would render Hankow useless as a supply base and undermine the enemy's entire effort in East China. Brigadier General K. B. Wolfe, of the Twentieth Air Force, agreed to fly the mission from Calcutta to avoid further drain on China's gas supplies. Stilwell also agreed to support the mission. Actually Stilwell merely forwarded my request to the Joint Chiefs of Staff without anything more than a routine endorsement. Without Stilwell's unqualified stamp of approval on the project, the Joint Chiefs of Staff remained dubious. Again I appealed directly to General Arnold, who, as Twentieth Air Force commander, had authority to order the Hankow mission. Arnold first replied that he would not authorize B-29's to hit any target that B-24's could reach and then authorized the first B-29 mission of the war against Bangkok, which had already been bombed by B-24's of the R.A.F. and U. S. Tenth and Fourteenth Air Forces. Later Arnold suggested the Chinese Air Force be used to wipe out Hankow. At that time the Chinese bomber force consisted of nine obsolete Lockheed Hudsons and some unflyable Russian SB-3's of 1937 vintage. All during the summer, when the Hankow mission might have been one of the critical differences between victory and defeat Arnold and Stilwell stalled. Only after Stilwell's recall when Lieutenant General Albert Wedemeyer, the new China Theater commander, strongly supported my request, was the Hankow B-29 mission authorized. On December 18, more than a month after East China was lost, 77 B-29's burned the guts out of Hankow.

I tried to go over detailed plans for the defense of East China with Stilwell at our Kunming conference. My staff had drawn up a plan to use every element on the Fourteenth, except the planes needed to support the Salween operation, in defense of East China with logistical support of 11,000 Hump tons a month. Stilwell looked at his watch, stuffed my plans into his pocket, and said he would let me know his decision later. He strode off to catch a plane back to his beloved Burma. That was the last I saw of him until early fall after East China had been irrevocably lost. Repeated requests for his decision on my plans met with complete silence.

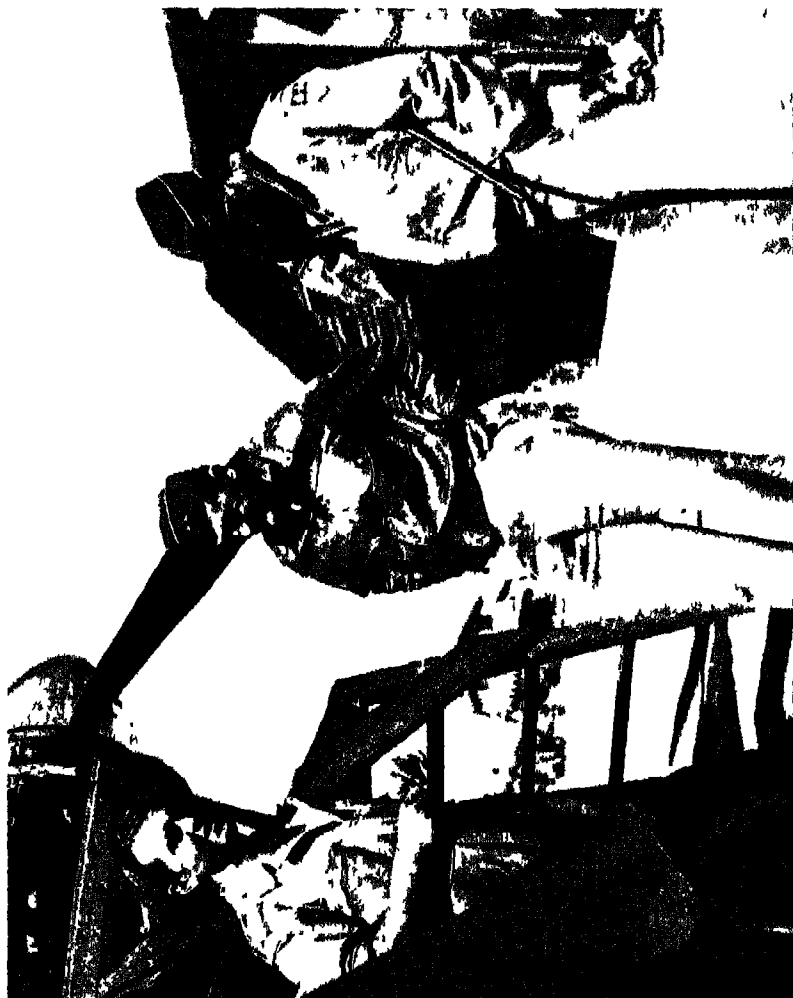
Stilwell finally declared an emergency in China on June 8, 45 days after the Japanese offensive in Honan began, 13 days after the enemy jumped off into Hunan, and more than three months after I sent him a three-alarm radio warning that China was in mortal danger.

Marshal Hsueh Yo's original strategy called for stopping the Japanese at Changsha, scene of his three earlier triumphs. He massed his artillery—all 60 pieces—on Yoloshan, a hill overlooking the city, and from there planned to pound the Japanese spearhead as it fought through the town against well-dug-in defenders. Hsueh planned to hold at Changsha while the full weight of the Fourteenth air attacks drained the nourishment from the enemy's supply lines all the way up to Hankow. There was never any intention on my part to stop the Japanese drive with airpower alone. Later, when Stilwell needed a convenient excuse for the loss of East China, he and certain members of his staff circulated the deliberate lie that this had been my plan.

Air attacks on the Japanese columns took a terrible toll and often seriously delayed an advance, but they could never really stop the offensive. We were well aware of that fact. Only air attacks on supply lines could really be decisive. To give these attacks maximum effect, we needed a Chinese dam to make the Japanese expend their field supplies and force them to rely on large quantities of fresh supplies moving to the front. Then we could draw the sting from the enemy attack. Within a matter of weeks his field armies would be swinging with the slow feeble punches of a fighter past his prime in the fading rounds of a long bout.

The Japanese foiled Hsueh's original strategy by outflanking Changsha, leaving his massed artillery and dug-in defenders to be polished off at Japanese leisure after their food and ammunition ran low. The Japanese flood tide swept on to lap around the edges of Hengyang before Changsha finally fell. Fall of Changsha on June 18 touched off a burst of panic in Chungking. Chinese War Ministry ordered executions of field commanders blamed for the loss and began to run the war by long-distance telephone and telegraph. Stilwell's headquarters in Chungking echoed his gloomy sentiments. Brigadier General Ferris, in charge of Chungking headquarters, radioed Stilwell on June 26: "Chinese will not make stand at Hengyang stop There is possibility of enemy reaching Kweilin within seven days stop Earlier abandonment of Kweilin airdromes may be necessary." Ferris also ordered evacuation of Stilwell's Zebra forces from East China. The Americans of Zebra forces rolled out of Kweilin in trucks early in July, abandoning many of their supplies, including the best-equipped base hospital in East China, which had been built at the cost of many a Hump ton. Some of the Zebra-force crew returned, a little sheepishly, in August and stayed on until the end of Kweilin.

The Hunan air-raid warning net crumbled as Japanese troops over-



Chennault and his chief  
of staff, Brig. Gen. Glenn,  
chat with a mechanic on  
the fighter line.





Mitchell bombers from  
Luichow smash Japanese  
shipping in a low-level  
attack on Hong Kong  
harbor.

ran the stations. "Tex" Hill kept his fighters at Hengyang for three extra days without warning, gambling on the bad weather to keep the Japanese Air Force grounded while his P-40's got in their last licks with a ten-minute shuttle to the front lines. On June 26, with the Japanese only twenty miles away, the fighters left Hengyang for the last time. That night American ground crews blew up and burned our base and retired up the river in a motorboat. The next day our air attacks continued without interruption from Lingling, 100 miles to the south.

On June 28 the Japanese took Hengyang airfield and began envelopment of Hengyang city. Across the river from the airfield, the Chinese Tenth Army commanded by General Fong Hsien Chien was entrenched among the gray brick and slate buildings of the city.

The Japanese advance flowed swiftly around the Tenth Army in Hengyang, leaving them cut off from reinforcements and supplies, and then began the job of rooting the Chinese out of their concrete pill-boxes and trenches. There the Japanese ran into their first real trouble of the campaign, and the battle of Hengyang began. Before it was finished, more than a half-million men were involved in this struggle that sealed the fate of an area almost as large as the United States east of the Mississippi River. Yet the battle of Hengyang passed almost unnoticed in the American press. Invasion of Europe was filling front pages during the summer of 1944 and what little news came out of the C.B.I. was furnished by American newspapermen whom Stilwell had corralled in Burma to magnify the dreary siege of Myitkyina into a glorious victory.

General Fong was one of Hsueh Yo's best field commanders, a veteran of the first major Japanese defeat at Taierschwang and the last two victories at Changsha. Fong's 10,000 troops, equipped with three French 75-mm. cannon, a few machine guns and mortars, and old handmade Chinese rifles, stuck in Hengyang like the cork in a champagne bottle. Their defense of Hengyang against overwhelming superiority in numbers and equipment was one of the truly great epics of the Sino-Japanese war.

First Japs to assault Hengyang lacked sufficient strength for sustained effort. They were the troops who had spearheaded the enemy offensive all the way from Yochow and had run the gantlet of air attack for more than thirty days. Many units had suffered up to 30-per-cent casualties without once engaging Chinese ground troops. Most of these troops still carried their original supplies, issued before the campaign began. To take Hengyang in the face of the Tenth Army's stubborn defense, the Japanese needed to move up large

quantities of supplies, equipment, and fresh manpower. As long as the Chinese in Hengyang sat astride the railroad, river, and highway, the Japanese offensive remained stalled a few miles south of the city, unable to regain its momentum until the supply lines were cleared. The blitz bogged down into a siege operation.

This was the chance the Fourteenth had been waiting for. Main weight of our air attack shifted from front-line columns to the exposed enemy supply lines now stretching back two hundred miles to the permanent Japanese depot at Yochow.

Japanese supplies for the Hengyang battle moved through three channels: by boat across Tungting Lake and up the Siang River, by mule-pack train down the abandoned railroad bed from Yochow to Hengyang, and by truck along the highway that paralleled the abandoned railroad. Larger towns along these routes were used as supply dumps and transshipment points. Smaller villages and compounds were used as troop bivouacs for reserves. All Jap supplies funneled out of Hankow. Everything took a round-the-clock pounding from the Fourteenth's planes. Missions went deep into the enemy rear to bomb supply dumps and then came back along the river or roads strafing anything that moved. P-40's carried as many bombs during those assaults as the bombers, and B-25's came down to treetop level to strafe with their heavy machine guns and 75-mm. cannon. Liberators flying from Kunming bombed the largest enemy bases at Yochow, Changsha, and Hankow. Our field-intelligence agents located the largest Japanese transshipment point between Yochow and Hengyang. We hit it continuously with P-40 dive bombers, B-25's, and B-24's for 48 hours. It burned and exploded for seven days. Pilots flying north at night to hammer enemy airdromes could navigate by the beacons of burning cities all the way to Hankow. Fighters and cannon-carrying B-25's combed the Siang River clean of enemy shipping and forced truck convoys to operate only at night. B-25's led formations of P-40's on night sweeps of the roads, dropping flares over truck convoys to light the target for the fighter's attacks.

With the break to good weather early in July the Japanese Air Force ventured out from Hankow. The Oscars and Tojos were wary of offensive action and confined their sorties to defensive patrols over the Japanese armies. In four weeks our fighters shot 120 enemy planes out of East China skies and broke the back of the enemy's bomber force—catching it on the ground at Yochow in two dawn strikes that burned up 90 Japanese planes. Bombing our airfields under cover of darkness was the only offensive action the enemy air force attempted, despite

the desperate need of the Japanese armies for strong air support.

By early July the Japanese were beginning to feel the pinch of our air lock on their supply lines. More and more Japanese prisoners were captured while detached from their units on food-foraging expeditions—stripping peach trees of fruit, digging potatoes, and exploring deserted compounds. All of them were thin and ragged. They all told the same story: no rice had reached them for a week to 10 days; their units were running low on ammunition; many units were still fighting on the 200 rounds of ammunition issued at Yochow just before the offensive began; because of our attacks they were forced to hide by day, confining their movements and fighting to the hours of darkness.

By July 8 Japanese pressure on Hengyang relaxed, while those worn divisions were withdrawn, and fresh troops and heavy artillery were moved up to tighten the siege. Another drive that pushed north from Canton to join the northern forces suddenly withdrew to its original positions. Chinese misinterpreted the Japanese regrouping for defeat. For a brief week the streets of Kweilin were heavy with the smoke of firecracker celebrations. Hissing skyrocket and fiery flares split the warm gloom of Kwangsi nights. Merchants of Kweilin loaded trucks with gifts of ivory, silk, jade, and lacquerware and drove them to the airfields for presentation to American airmen. The sharp check to the Japanese advance at Hengyang also gave the Chinese high command time to recover from their initial shock. Six armies from four war areas were set to moving toward the relief of Hengyang, and Hsueh Yo, with his armies spread all along the Japanese eastern flank, began counterattacks to aid our air pressure on key enemy supply bases.

Loosening of the enemy grip on Hengyang coincided with the end of Japanese resistance on Saipan and the fall of the Tojo cabinet in Tokyo. The entire Japanese strategy for carrying on the war went through radical revision during this crisis. Postwar interrogation of Japanese commanders in China revealed that the abandonment of the East China offensive was seriously weighed at this time. Lieutenant General Takahashi, Japanese chief of staff in China, and his key staff officers were firmly convinced that a 50-per-cent increase in American air attacks on their supply lines and front-line troops would have stopped their advance at Hengyang and eventually forced retirement to Changsha where they planned to dig in and hold.

By mid-July the enemy was again engaged in a major effort to take Hengyang with 40,000 fresh troops, heavy artillery, and small tanks. More than 200,000 Japanese troops were now engaged in the entire offensive. Part of our air effort was diverted to bombing and strafing

enemy artillery positions and strong points. A handful of P-40's shuttling over Hengyang all day kept the Japanese in their foxholes and halted daylight attacks on the city. At night enemy artillery thundered away, setting the city on fire. B-25's flew over the Japanese perimeter at night, spotting gun flashes and showering them with parafrag bombs. Inside the city Fong's Tenth Army was getting desperate with food and ammunition running critically low. In response to Fong's urgent radio appeals I tried to get Stilwell to send even a single flight of transports to drop supplies at Hengyang. He rejected my plea with the observation that "it would set a precedent for further demands that would not be met." In desperation I sent B-25's by day and our own C-47's at night to parachute rice and medical supplies into Hengyang. Later "Casey" Vincent dipped into his own meager stocks of aircraft ammunition to drop 75-mm. shells and .50-caliber machine-gun bullets into Hengyang to keep the Chinese firepower going. Luke Williamson led these drops, flying unarmed C-47's through the ring of Japanese flak around Hengyang to make precision drops from 300 feet over the flaming city.

This was the only American ammunition delivered to the Chinese armies defending our airfields until late September, after the fate of East China was already sealed. Stilwell rejected, on one pretext or another, every attempt to get American arms to these Chinese troops fighting so desperately to halt the Japanese drive. Stilwell was then engaged in his final struggle with the Generalissimo for command of all Chinese armies.

This struggle had embittered Stilwell toward Chinese leaders and the Chinese government. Besides his Burma campaign he had room in his mind only for the command problem. Stilwell had also firmly committed himself at Trident to the view that any Japanese offensive in East China would be successful and that loss of our eastern airfields was inevitable. There is little doubt that this had a strong subconscious influence on his attitude toward the repeated requests for action from both the Fourteenth and the Chinese. All of this is indicated with astonishing frankness in a series of radios from Brigadier General Tom Hearn, who succeeded Ferris in command of Stilwell's China headquarters. Hearn warned Stilwell on July 26 that "I do not believe we can justify further delay in taking drastic action in regard to this [East China] situation" and recommended some immediately specific action "pending a certain big decision." When I offered to divert 1,000 tons of Fourteenth Air Force tonnage to supplying Hsueh Yo's armies with guns and ammunition Hearn answered:

Your proposition to divert 1,000 tons from air force allotment to ground force supplies in order to retake Hengyang has been given best treatment in this shop. . . . Stilwell also sent us his views on situation. He agrees that to restore situation in the east a real operation is required. *He is working on a proposition that will give this spot a real face losing and is loath to commit himself to any definite line of action right now. Consequently we must hold off making any offers of help to ground troops until things precipitate a bit more.* [Italics mine.] Realizing the press of time sorry had to hold up this non-committal answer until heard from boss."

About the same time I received a radio from our intelligence liaison officer with Hsueh Yo:

Was asked today by Hsueh if I had heard anything about his request for material aid. Hsueh is not a man to be easily discouraged and no one wants to kill Japs more sincerely than he but this afternoon smoking a cigarette he smiled in a quizzical manner, sort of shook his head and said: "It is not easy to fight with the guns I've got." I asked him if Zebra forces had been willing to make any commitment when Lindsey [Z force commander] saw Hsueh yesterday. Hsueh said Lindsey begged off saying Hump transport facilities were inadequate. The Fourteenth would stand to gain in direct ratio to amount of supply we could place in Hsueh Yo's hands. Let it be said in his great favor that he uses his guns to kill Japs.

My final request for even 500 tons of arms for Hsueh received this answer from Hearn:

In view location Hsueh Yo's forces, his mission, rapidly changing situation, Chinese misuse of equipment they have and improper employment of their forces, your proposal to fly 500 tons of small arms and ammunition would be waste of effort. Entire American effort should be continued from the air.

At this time Hsueh's forces were located on the eastern flank of the Japanese salient and in some places had driven to within ten miles of the Siang River and were within an ace of slicing the main enemy supply line. His mission then as always was killing Japs.

In contrast to the view of American staff officers in Chungking on Chinese "misuse of equipment" is the following report from another

Fourteenth Air Force radio-intelligence officer, Navy Lieutenant S. A. McCaffrey, who had been in combat for a month with two of Hsueh Yo's armies east of Hengyang:

Both armies were equipped in the poorest manner possible. The average soldier is between 18-25 and has served in the army from 3 to 7 years. His health is poor and he has led a hard life. All of these soldiers have been engaged in active fighting in this campaign for several months.

Their clothing consists of a ragged, torn jersey, a shirt, and a scanty pair of shorts. Some have wrap-around cloth leggings; most haven't. The more fortunate wear straw sandals the rest go bare-foot. They are armed with an old-fashioned bolt-action rifle and carry their own limited supply of ammunition. There is a tremendous lack of heavy weapons; a few machine guns and practically no mortars or heavy guns. They have more Japanese-captured mortars and ammunition for them than for any other weapon. What little supplies the army has are carried by hand. Food is limited and each soldier is lucky if he gets two bowls of rice a day. There seems to be no meat or vegetables. Although the men are in poor health and many are wounded, there is no medical attention or supplies. A majority have malaria. The losses of these armies through sickness and casualties have been enormous. Whereas the Twentieth army formerly had 20,000 men it now has no more than 5,000. There has been great loss in officers and there is a serious shortage of lieutenants, captains, majors. Whereas the physical equipment of these Chinese soldiers is appallingly poor, their spirit and morale are absolutely amazing. With poor weapons, sick, and faced by an enemy superior in numbers and equipment, these Chinese fight bravely without relief or complaint. Their courage and bravery is truly outstanding and I found it in all ranks. There are no armchair strategists in this battle. The general who plans the attack at night directs the fighting by day at the front. These are fighting men to be admired.

Our own supply problems were also growing acute. Gas consumption in the east rocketed to 60 per cent above April. Vincent's planes were burning gas twice as fast as the supply line could move it to Kweilin. Heavy rains during early June had caused landslides along the Tushan highway, temporarily blocking supply trucks. Stilwell's promise in early June of 7th Bomb Group tankers to fly gas to the eastern fields was not made good until late July. Every day some

pilot from Vincent's headquarters flew an old training plane down the railroad to Liuchow and up toward Tushan to spot any gas trains that might be on the way.

A special squadron of Liberators, equipped with low-altitude radar bombing apparatus, had begun operations out of Kweilin in June. With this special equipment they were able to attack enemy shipping at night from low levels where their bombs seldom missed. During June these planes averaged 900 tons of Japanese shipping sunk per sortie. Their record for getting the most results from the least supplies was fantastically good. During a four-month period they sank a ton of Japanese shipping for every 2½ pounds of bombs dropped and every 2 gallons of gas their planes burned. The first week in July gas reserves in the east fell so low I had to order these B-24's back to Kunming and stop antishipping operations when the pay-off promised to reach new peaks. By July 13 the gas situation was acute. "Casey" Vincent reported only 4,000 gallons at Liuchow and 8,500 gallons at Kweilin, with only 13,000 gallons on the way by rail. Now the extra B-25 reinforcements followed the B-24's back west due to the gas shortage. The 5th Fighter Group of the Chinese-American Composite Wing joined the fray from their new base at Chihkiang early in July, but low gas levels there kept their full weight from the enemy supply lines. Vincent kept his fighters going for three more days by using up reserves at outlying staging fields and siphoning the tanks of his remaining bombers. On July 17 he had only enough gas left to fly every plane in East China back to Kunming—the rock-bottom minimum reserve. For five days almost every plane in East China was grounded for lack of gas. A few 5th Fighter P-40's from Chihkiang, where there was a little gas left, were the only Allied planes over Hengyang for a week.

At the very moment when our grip on the Japanese jugular was strongest and we were within an ace of throttling them, our clutch relaxed completely. The half-choked enemy breathed in new vitality through unmolested supply lines.

The Japanese were quick to seize their advantage in mounting heavier attacks on Hengyang but again they missed their chance to knock out the Fourteenth. Bad weather screened our fields during three days of that gasless week. If the Japanese Air Force had had the courage to attack our bases in daylight, our planes would have been helpless on the ground with empty gas tanks after the second alert. There was evidence that the Japanese pilots were screwing up courage for just such an attempt and again concentrating bombers at Yochow when gas again began to trickle into Kweilin. In another dawn strike



at Yochow airdrome P-40's celebrated their return to the air by wiping out some forty enemy planes on the ground. 7th Bomb Group tankers began delivering gas to Liuchow. The land supply line flowed at an ever increasing tempo until, under Colonel Sheehan's expert guidance, it moved 6,500 tons to East China in September.

Our air pressure on the Japanese gradually built up again until by mid-August it was stronger than ever before. But our strategic hour had already struck. Utilizing the mass of men and supplies moved up during our grounded weeks in late July, the Japanese overwhelmed the defenders of Hengyang and took the city on August 8 after a siege of 49 days. Remnants of the Tenth Army, less than 300 strong, demonstrated how narrow the margin of defeat was, by fighting their way to the nearest Chinese relief armies then only two miles east of the city.

The fall of Hengyang sealed the fate of East China. With the exception of Hsueh Yo's unceasing attacks along the Japanese eastern flank there was little further Chinese resistance. Yet the weight of our increasing air attacks grew so heavy that it took the Japanese nearly a month after the fall of Hengyang to continue their drive toward Lingling.

East China was lost, as Stilwell predicted, if that afforded him any satisfaction. I think it did. East China was lost by such a narrow margin that it is quite plain that it need not have been lost except for the extraordinary series of decisions by the theater commander that consistently withheld the small amounts of material needed to tip the scales in our favor: a few thousand more Hump tons in February and March to smash at the Yangtze ports; a few hundred more trucks in April to pump the lifeblood of gasoline into our eastern bases; a single B-29 mission on Hankow; and a single flight of transports to drop a few hundred tons of ammunition to the bleeding defenders of Hengyang. Even after the Japanese offensive was stabbing through the eastern provinces with a vigor that even Stilwell recognized, he refused to order the total mobilization of all resources then available in China and the India supply depots on the single strategic threat but persisted in frittering them away on widely scattered and uncoordinated efforts. The fall of East China was the last chapter in the already sorry Allied record of "too little and too late."

After the war the Chinese erected a war memorial at Hengyang--a massive pyramid of 5,000 weathered skulls collected from the unburied dead of that grim battle. Gleaming in the sun on a Hunan hillside, this macabre memorial is convincing rebuttal to those who stoutly maintained "the Chinese won't fight."

For the rest of the summer and fall we fought a successful delaying action while the Japanese pressed doggedly on to forge their land link from Hankow to Indo-China. The Japanese continued to press for a speedy end to the campaign. The six-week battle of Hengyang had badly disrupted the enemy timetable, and each week of further delay sapped some strategic value from the goal the enemy sought in East China. With steady air pressure on the enemy supply lines the Japanese were never again able to regain the momentum of their pre-Hengyang offensive. Kweilin was blown up on September 15. Liuchow, the last of the main East China bases held out until November 7. Instead of the ninety-day blitz the Japanese planned to secure East China, they were forced into a six-month grind that cost them heavily in men, supplies, transport, and their most precious commodity—time. For, in the interval from the time the Chinese held at Hengyang until the last Fourteenth Air Force plane took off from Liuchow, the entire strategic position in the Pacific changed. By fall bulldozers were already building B-29 fields on Saipan and Guam; George Kenney's Far Eastern Air Force was flying off fields in the Philippines, and Navy carrier task forces were striking Formosa. With the Fourteenth still holding in East China, the aerial blockade of the Japanese life line through the South China Sea was completed in mid-October. Our B-24 operations, resumed from Liuchow in August, had scored fantastically in the Formosa Straits, averaging 1,100 tons of Japanese shipping sunk for every sortie, sinking a ton of Japanese shipping for every pound of bombs dropped, and damaging two tons of shipping for every gallon of gas burned. At these rates a full group of these special B-24's, requiring only 2,000 tons of Hump tonnage a month were capable of accounting for a million tons of enemy shipping within six months. Credit for these strategic shipping strikes belong to technical skill and courageous leadership of Lieutenant Colonels Hopson, Averill, and Major "Stump" Carswell, who won a posthumous Distinguished Service Cross for his incredible duel with the Japanese Navy during which his B-24 sank a cruiser and destroyer.

Perhaps the most striking demonstration of the Fourteenth's strategic role from its East China bases came on October 16 after Navy carrier planes and China-based B-29's had pounded Formosan ports and airfields for three solid days. Nearly 200,000 tons of Japanese shipping scuttled across the South China Sea from Formosan ports to seek refuge in Hong Kong's spacious anchorage. They had hardly dropped anchor when the Fourteenth struck them with everything we could get

into the air off Liuchow, our sole remaining major East China base at that time. Liberators from Kunming bombed ships along the coast from high altitude while B-25's from Liuchow swept across the harbor at mast height, skip-bombing shipping at anchor in the roadstead. P-51's swooped down in dive-bombing attacks while top cover P-40's shot down four of the Zekes that attempted interception. When the smoke cleared our photos showed 8 freighters sunk, 11 damaged with a total of 80,000 tons out of action and major damage to one of the largest repair facilities available to the Japanese outside their home islands. It was a clear demonstration to the enemy that there was no longer any refuge for his vital seapower from the full force of American airpower. Another demonstration of our strategic role occurred during the Second Battle of the Philippine Sea, termed by the Navy the decisive sea fight of the war. During this crucial period our China-based Liberators of the Fourteenth could provide the Navy with reconnaissance on its blind western flank in the South China Sea. Flying extra gas loads instead of bombs to extend their range, our Liberators flew Navy-specified patrols over the fleet's blind spots. It was a Fourteenth Air Force Liberator that gave the Navy its first warning on the Japanese carrier task force steaming south from the Pescadore to attack the defenders of the Leyte beachhead. It was Fourteenth Air Force Liberators that earned a "well done" from Admirals Nimitz and Halsey for their work in spotting the retiring units of the defeated Japanese fleet and locating them for submarine strikes along the line of retreat. During the months while East China was holding out, Liberators also mined the major Japanese harbors from Shanghai to Saigon and sank a quarter of a million tons of merchant shipping, two enemy cruisers, and four destroyers. This too was part of the tremendous price the enemy paid for East China.

Stilwell appeared again at Fourteenth's headquarters in Kunming on September 13 with the announcement that nothing could be done to save Kweilin. We flew to Kweilin together the next day, and after sniffing around the field, Stilwell ordered Vincent to begin demolition of the big base that had grown to three bomber fields and a fighter strip. Four days later on September 17, after he was thoroughly convinced that East China was hopelessly lost, Stilwell authorized a delivery of 500 tons of American arms and ammunition to the Chinese armies defending Kweilin. This was the first American aid to Chinese armies in the east except for the few 75-mm. shells and belts of .50 caliber machine-gun ammunition the Fourteenth dropped into Henan. Stilwell's decision came so late that only a few tons could be

delivered to Kweilin before the airfields were blown up. The rest had to be delivered to Liuchow, where it arrived only in time to be shipped back up the railroad to Tushan. In Tushan it was discovered by some O.S.S. demolition experts who took it as new evidence of Chinese "hoarding" and blew it all up as part of the "scorched earth" retreat policy.

Even with only sporadic Chinese opposition the Japanese spearheads took weeks to reach the vicinity of Kweilin and Liuchow. Our air effort reached its peak in September when the full effects of Stilwell's June Hump tonnage increases and Colonel Sheehan's efforts on the Tushan highway were felt in the east. Stilwell saved a final crushing blow at our cause. To keep fighting during the summer I used every ounce of gas available in China and borrowed heavily from reserves which the theater was stock-piling against some possible future use. This borrowing had been authorized by General Stratemeyer. But in October with the fate of Kweilin and Liuchow still not sealed, Stilwell ordered the Fourteenth to pay back all the gas borrowed from the theater reserve and allocated 8,000 tons top Hump priority to the Twentieth Air Force, to be collected from the Fourteenth. As a result our operations were immediately reduced by 25 per cent.

On October 17, Stilwell radioed me from Chungking:

Unauthorized use of theater stock pile reserves particularly when done by an officer of your rank sets a poor example for junior officers and is prejudicial to proper military discipline stop Your failure to make prompt report or bring matter to my attention has resulted in my making commitments in support of Pacific aid which are now embarrassing stop Such procedure is not consonant with rank and position you hold.

I replied:

I am both shocked and stunned at tone and content of your eyes alone message to me stop It is indeed difficult for me to reconcile the attitude expressed in this message with the atmosphere of friendliness in which we discussed these problems in your headquarters during the past week stop At that time I was given no indication of your displeasure over my action in furnishing the troops under my command with such essential supplies as were available for the continuance of our fight to retain bases in East China stop I am at loss in coping with accusation that my action has prevented your meeting certain commitments stop In order

that I make formal reply to these most serious accusations it is respectfully requested that I be furnished further details.

Stilwell retorted:

Message referred to was an administrative admonition designed to call attention to unauthorized diversion of supplies and to prevent repetition of it stop As such it must be obvious to you that it cannot be made a subject for argument.

Luke Williamson flew me down to Liuchow early in November for a final look at the east. Heavy clouds blanketed the east and we slipped into Liuchow under an 800-foot ceiling in heavy rain. The Japanese were then less than 50 miles away. It looked as though the weather might allow the Japanese the final triumph of catching our planes on the ground at Liuchow. On the night of November 7, "Casey" Vincent's men began putting the torch to our base at Liuchow. The next day with the ceiling still sagging below the surrounding peaks, the flag was hauled down, and the planes took off for the last time. The last plane off was a silver P-51 flown by "Casey," replacing a sick fighter pilot who had to be evacuated by transport. Weather was so bad that three fighter planes spun in and crashed before they reached West China bases. That night the Japanese cut the railroad 30 miles to the west of Liuchow and three days later occupied the city.

Both the Japanese and the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, prompted by Stilwell's dire prophecies, thought the smoke of Liuchow's burning hostels and blown runways meant the end of the Fourteenth Air Force in East China. Both were in for a big surprise.

WHILE the battle of East China dragged on to its indecisive end, the long rumbling feud between the Generalissimo and Stilwell erupted into a volcanic climax. On October 19, Stilwell was relieved of his command by the War Department and the C.B.I. Theater split into two sections. Major General Albert Coady Wedemeyer left Lord Louis Mountbatten's staff to head the new China Theater and was soon given the third star of a lieutenant general. Stilwell's former chief of staff, Major General Daniel Isom Sultan, commanded the new India-Burma Theater.

I was not sorry to see Stilwell go. This wry, wiry little man carried with him out of China the curious mixture of pride, prejudice, misunderstanding, and misdirected determination that poisoned Sino-American relations for two critical years and hamstrung effective Allied strategy on the Asiatic continent.

The American press, forced to depend on heavily censored fragments of the Asiatic war for their judgment, almost universally mourned Stilwell's departure from China as a defeat of simple homespun Yankee virtue at the hands of wicked and cunning Oriental guile. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. Stilwell's departure from the C.B.I. marked the conclusion of a sorry period in Sino-American relations and the end of a policy that had helped reduce China from an ally of potential strength in both war and peace to the sinking nation that now confronts us and poses the most acute problem in preserving the peace of the world. Stilwell's abrupt exit cleared the way for the first effective top-level Sino-American military co-operation of the war. So marked was the change that, less than six months after Stilwell left, Wedemeyer and his chief field commander, Major General Robert McLure, had forged a genuine Sino-American ground-army team on a basis that Stilwell contended was impossible. In the flood of somewhat

misguided sympathy that followed Stilwell's ouster, the magnificent job done by Wedemeyer and McLure has been generally overlooked.

It is impossible to understand what is happening in China today without a thorough examination of Stilwell's stewardship of American policy in China. It was during this period that American policy in China was first diverted to achieve Stilwell's questionable goals. It was then that the twin American goals of swift victory in war and creation of a strong, independent Chinese ally to preserve the peace became lost in a fog of mutual suspicion and military blundering.

The fabric of Stilwell's tragic failure in China was woven from many strands. Certainly one of the strongest was the essential simplicity of his nature and the rigidity of his orthodox military training. Stilwell always thought of himself as a field commander. He seemed most happy and effective when plying that trade. Stilwell was personally brave, enjoyed the rigors of field campaigning, and had the rare quality of being able to lead men under enemy fire. As a devout student of infantry tactics, Stilwell's view was always concentrated on the simple objective of blasting out the enemy immediately ahead and then advancing. This was an ideal temperament for a division commander but hardly the viewpoint of a competent theater commander. There was considerable truth, along with the malice, in the oft-repeated description of Stilwell as "the best four-star battalion commander in the Army."

It was unfortunate for both Stilwell and the cause he served for a man of his character to be plunged into the toughest military-diplomatic assignment of the war. It was in this gulf between the simplicity of Stilwell's nature and the intricate complexities of his job as top-ranking American in the China-Burma-India Theater that so many of his troubles began. It was this incessant struggle with problems that he only vaguely understood that fermented the increasing bitterness that marked Stilwell's final year as C.B.I. Theater commander. Few life-long professional soldiers do well in diplomatic assignments. Eisenhower and Wedemeyer were the exceptions, Stilwell the rule.

Stilwell received his military education during a period during which no senior commander considered it necessary to explore the concepts of airpower. Ridicule for the new weapon was the fashion for Stilwell's military contemporaries, and it is not surprising that he shared this view. Stilwell was an even more violent partisan of the infantry than I was of airpower. His acceptance of the airplane was limited to using it as a method of personal transport and later as a means of emergency supply to rescue his forces from the results of too casual logistical

planning. Stilwell never changed his ideas about airpower despite the overwhelming mass of evidence of its effectiveness that arose from the pace of the war. In April of 1945, less than three months before the end of the war, Stilwell was commanding the Tenth Army on Okinawa. In a public press interview Stilwell predicted that it would take two more years of fighting to end the war. He stated flatly that the Japanese could only be defeated by invading their homeland and digging them out at bayonet point. From the relish with which he outlined the proposed bayonet assault I gathered that Stilwell must have been tremendously disappointed when swifter and surer methods were used to make Japan surrender. How many American lives that venture of Stilwell's would have cost, I shudder to guess.

Stilwell's restricted military view was reflected in his concentration on the Burma campaign to the exclusion of any participation in the main objectives of the Pacific strategy. He seemed content to let the rest of the Pacific war go its way so long as he was allowed to proceed with his projects in Burma. In the simplicity of this jungle campaign aimed at driving the enemy the length of Burma, Stilwell found refuge from the top-level conference tables with their multiplicity of Anglo-Sino-American problems and the continual clash of national interests that are the hallmark of any coalition of allies. Nor did Stilwell devote much effort to the two basic activities that are the foundation of any successful military operation—intelligence and logistics.

Stilwell's justification for the North Burma campaign was the opening of a land supply line to China. Yet his planning for this venture was such that neither Stilwell nor his staff ever prepared an accurate appraisal of the resources required to fight the campaign or the eventual military value of its successful completion. From the first it was obvious that the Stilwell Road would produce little more than the few thousand tons a month that eventually trickled from it into China. Yet Stilwell persisted in pouring an ever increasing amount of men, equipment, blood, and money into a venture that would have no military value even if successful.

Even though the Stilwell Road was almost completed by the time Stilwell left the C.B.I., there were absolutely no provisions to supply the trucks needed to operate on the road to China or to carry the supplies from Kunming eastward to the Fourteenth Air Force bases and the Chinese armies in contact with the Japanese. Getting these trucks was one of Wedemeyer's first jobs when he succeeded Stilwell. Ironically, Wedemeyer got the trucks from a Foreign Economic Ad-



ministration project involving 5,000 Dodge trucks. This project had been offered Stilwell early in 1944 by F.E.A. chief Whiting Willauer and flatly rejected.

Stilwell's vigorous opposition to the Hump air lift has already been detailed. At its peak the Hump used about 30,000 men and 600 transport planes to deliver 71,000 tons of net cargo to China during a single month (July 1945). After twelve months of fighting involving several hundred thousand Allied troops, sizable contingents of the Royal Air Force and the U.S. Tenth Air Force, and an engineering effort costing roughly two hundred million dollars, the Stilwell Road reached a point where its one-way traffic could no longer deliver net cargo to China and the entire net worth of the project was flowing through its accompanying pipe line. This point was reached less than six months after the Stilwell Road opened for traffic. Less than three weeks after the road officially opened in January 1945, the China Theater staff declared it to be logistically worthless.

Stilwell's indifference to intelligence is also well documented. Neither in Burma nor in China did his C.B.I. headquarters make any effort to organize an effective intelligence network. Lacking any genuine intelligence necessary for a sound military appraisal of enemy intentions and capabilities it is not surprising that Stilwell was so often wrong about both. Stilwell not only lacked his own sources of intelligence but was also prone to discount any intelligence offered him from other quarters. Thus he was caught by complete surprise by the Japanese offensive into India during March of 1944 that nearly isolated his entire force in North Burma. During the same spring he chose to ignore the persistent intelligence presented to him regarding Japanese intentions in East China and again was surprised and unprepared when the enemy blow struck.

Much has been made of the Generalissimo's opposition to Stilwell's Burma campaign as evidence that the Chinese were unwilling to fight. It is quite true that the Generalissimo was unwilling to squander his troops on the Burma campaign Stilwell finally undertook. He knew better. The folly of Stilwell's venture was obvious to the Generalissimo, an experienced soldier, from the start.

The Generalissimo agreed to a Burma campaign as an all-out effort by the British, Americans, and Chinese that promised a speedy pay-off. I always felt that Mountbatten's proposal for an amphibious landing either at Rangoon or in the Andaman Islands was infinitely preferable to Stilwell's plan since it would have cut off all the Japanese in Burma from their supplies and turned their own weight and

numbers against them. Mountbatten planned to swing a machete to slice through the Japanese neck in Burma, leaving the main body of their troops in the severed head to starve. In contrast, Stilwell planned to start in northern Burma and root out every last Japanese along the way. Stilwell apparently never realized that the farther he progressed the more he would pile up the weight of the Japanese against him. When the effect of this accumulated Japanese weight was finally felt during the ten-week siege of Myitkyina and increased by the monsoon mud, Stilwell again expressed surprise. The Generalissimo withdrew his support for the Burma campaign only after the British canceled their amphibious landing due to an alleged landing-boat shortage and the United States came through with only the 3,000 troops of Merrill's Marauders instead of the two full combat divisions (20,000 men) promised. The Generalissimo's position was based on the opinion that a limited northern Burma offensive meant a heavy Chinese investment and promised only meager results. Events proved that estimate entirely accurate. I believe the varying appraisals by the Generalissimo and Stilwell on the value of the Burma venture provide a fair measure of their relative military merit.

Stilwell clung so tenaciously to the Burma campaign principally because it was the simplest military venture available in his theater. It required the least logistical planning, intelligence, and modern tactics. To begin this campaign Stilwell had only to move his troops to the farthest outpost in the Assam Valley and, with the courage it always requires to face the unknown, begin walking forward.

In appraising Stilwell's constant chant that the Chinese leaders failed to keep their military promises to him; it is interesting to note Sir Robert Brooke-Popham's final report on his command of the British Far Eastern Forces. Discussing the prewar Chinese promises of aid to the British in Burma when war came, Brooke-Popham states, "They [the Chinese] kept their promises."

Such was my own experience in dealing with Chinese leaders during more than eight years of battle. After the war Lieutenant General Wedemeyer offered similar testimony to the Eightieth Congress in public hearings.

Stilwell always claimed that the objective of his Burma campaign was to pave the way for effective military operations in China. During his entire C.B.I. command he and his staff made no formal plans for military operations in China except for the Salween offensive to aid the Burma campaign. When Wedemeyer arrived in China to take command, one of his first official acts was to call for Stilwell's China

war plans. Stilwell's Chungking chief of staff, Tom Hearn, was forced to admit that no such plans existed.

Intelligence is the basis for all planning. Stilwell relied on the leisurely flow of Chinese intelligence collected by mail, telegraph, and rarely by radio and slowly siphoned through the Chinese War Ministry to American Chungking headquarters and thence through routine channels of command to the tactical units that were supposed to use it. By the time this information reached combat troops it was too ancient to be of any value. Yet Stilwell remained satisfied with this inaccurate and somewhat ancient history and actually forbade the Fourteenth Air Force to collect the vital target intelligence we needed to make our bombs and bullets effective. Not until a new C.B.I. intelligence chief took over in May 1944 did the Fourteenth Air Force radio-intelligence network get official theater sanction. When Major General "Wild Bill" Donovan, chief of the Office of Strategic Services, offered additional radio equipment for this net, Stilwell prevented it from reaching China.

The occasional estimates Stilwell made of the military situation in China were based on the fundamental premise that the Chinese would not fight. His persistence in this thesis continued despite a steady stream of reports from Navy and Air Force intelligence officers in the field with Chinese armies in action against the Japanese. There is no more revealing evidence on this score than the experience of a Colonel Gould, who came to China in the spring of 1945 from the War Department Military Intelligence Service. Gould insisted on going to the front where a Japanese offensive was thrusting toward the Tungkwan Pass and the key city of Sian. Stilwell's former intelligence chief assured Gould that it was a waste of time to go to the front since "the Chinese never fought." Gould persisted and returned to Sian with the comment that the Chinese were fighting "like U.S. Marines."

Another major factor in Stilwell's trouble with the Chinese was his persistent attempts to gain command of all Chinese ground troops. The Generalissimo was never opposed in principle to American command of Chinese troops. When Stilwell arrived in China early in 1942 the Generalissimo gave him command of the Chinese Expeditionary Force in Burma. Stilwell himself acknowledged that this was unprecedented Chinese support for a foreign leader. Twice the Generalissimo offered me command of the Chinese Air Force. Both times the War Department ordered me to refuse.

It was only after the Burma defeat in 1942 that the Generalissimo began to have misgivings over Stilwell's ability in the field. Basic causes

for the 1942 disaster in Burma went far beyond Stilwell's action in splitting the Chinese forces at a crucial moment in the battle to rescue encircled British troops. But that was what first undermined the Generalissimo's confidence in Stilwell. Nevertheless the Generalissimo continued to allow Stilwell to command the remnants of this Chinese force that reached India and later augmented Stilwell's command by shipping 100,000 Chinese troops across the Hump to India. These troops were stripped from the defenses of China proper at a time when the military situation there was growing steadily worse.

Stilwell was never satisfied with the size of his field command. His rasping relations with the British made it impossible for him to get any troops from them. The United States refused to send him any except the 3,000 infantrymen later known as Merrill's Marauders. The Chinese remained his sole possible source of more troops, and so he bedeviled the Chinese High Command ceaselessly for new levies. The only remaining goal that seemed feasible to Stilwell was to gain command of all Chinese armies, and it was his struggle toward that end that continually widened the rift between him and the Generalissimo. Stilwell's command was first voiced when he returned to Chungking in June 1942 after the Burma disaster. He then presented a plan to reorganize Chinese armies with Americans in every post calling for colonels or above and Stilwell in supreme command. This was rejected by the Generalissimo.

In his personal relations with the Generalissimo and other Chinese leaders with whom he was called upon to work, Stilwell displayed remarkably poor tactics. He offered as signal proof of his faith in China his belief that it was possible to induce Chinese soldiers to fight. Yet he regarded the men who had led the long Chinese resistance to the Japanese only as obstacles to continuing the war. Stilwell relied mainly on what Tom Hearn called "the old bluff, threat, entreaty, expostulation, and bluff treatment." Stilwell apparently knew no other way to solicit co-operation than to announce that American supplies would be withheld if the Chinese did not accede to his wishes. If left to his own devices Stilwell would have wielded his control of lend-lease to China like a shillelagh to club all Chinese opposition into line. When Stilwell was unable to find any effective method of working with the Chinese he naturally assumed that such methods were nonexistent. As his inability to work with Chinese leaders became more apparent and his frustration increased, Stilwell's indiscretions multiplied. He made no secret of his low opinions of Chinese leadership in general and individuals whom he singled out for particularly scathing attacks.

He seemed to enjoy "off-the-record" press conferences with American correspondents at which he freely delivered his indictments of the Chinese government.

Early in 1943 he greeted an Associated Press correspondent with the startling news that China's greatest need was the execution of a hundred top Chinese leaders. Stilwell's staff seemed to delight in retailing all the most malicious gossip on Chinese leaders. If Stilwell did not actively encourage this as another method of applying pressure on the Generalissimo, he was certainly remiss in not taking drastic action to check it. On one occasion when the question arose as to whether American or Chinese officers were to command supply depots on the Salween front, Stilwell told the Chinese commander, General Chen Cheng, that although he considered Chen personally honest and trustworthy the rest of the Chinese officer corps were too corrupt to be trusted with supplies anywhere but on the firing line. This was before a large mixed group of Chinese and American officers. It is not hard to see how mutual suspicion and hatred thrived in this sort of atmosphere.

Although Stilwell was not seriously concerned with military problems in China, he did not hesitate to plunge into Chinese politics to further his ends. By the fall of 1943 his relations with top Chinese leadership were so bad that his recall was seriously considered. President Roosevelt wrote a note to Marshall pointing out that Stilwell appeared to have apparently "outlived his usefulness" in China and should be replaced. Marshall replied that he had no suitable substitute, and Stilwell stayed on for another critical year.

During this crisis in October 1943 it was the modernist element of the Kuomintang that was seeking Stilwell's ouster, largely because his neglect of China's military needs was aggravating the country's internal crisis. Stilwell then did not hesitate to align himself with the most reactionary elements in the Kuomintang to route the modernists and preserve his position. In the joint triumph of Stilwell and the Kuomintang reactionaries the best element of leadership in both the government and army were swept into exile. Less than six months later it was Stilwell and his Chungking staff who were assailing most bitterly the reactionary character of the Generalissimo's government, which they had helped create. The reactionaries supported Stilwell and encouraged him in his recalcitrance because their political power depended on continued lack of Sino-American co-operation. Effective Sino-American relations would have strengthened the position of the pro-American modernists.

This reactionary triumph had severe military repercussions in the fighting of 1944. Most of the East China leaders, such as Hseuh Yo and Chang Fa Kwei, defender of Kweilin, were aligned with the modernist element in the army. When their leaders were swept out of power, relations between the Chungking War Ministry and the East China commanders deteriorated to the point where supplies were slow in arriving, and Chungking took to second-guessing the field commanders via long-distance phone and telegraph, only adding to the confusion and demoralization. Stilwell always seemed singularly unaware of the far-reaching results of his meddling in internal Chinese politics, gauging his actions only by the immediate effect they had on his schemes.

Stilwell's worst political excursion came during the summer and early fall of 1944 when he began using the Chinese Communist government of Yen-an as a lever to move the Generalissimo. Although Stilwell was never particularly interested in Chinese intelligence, he sent an official American military mission to the Communist capital at Yen-an in May 1944 for the alleged purpose of gathering intelligence. The Chinese Communists were then on extremely thin military and economic ice. Ever since the fighting between the Communist-controlled New Fourth Army and Central Government troops along the Yangtze in 1940, the main Communist armies had been bottled up in Shensi Province between the Japanese and Central Government. There they were militarily impotent and hard pressed to provide the bare necessities of life. Much has been written by gullible correspondents, some of them with pronounced Communist sympathies, regarding the vast military effort of the Chinese Communists against the Japanese. My experience indicated that the Communist military activities were confined largely to raiding small Japanese outposts for food and arms. When the Japanese were attacking Central Government troops, the Communists were generally content to stand idly by. It was significant that during the Honan campaign in the early spring of 1944 the Communist guerrillas did not sabotage a single Japanese troop train moving south down the Pinghan Railroad to the Yellow River. These trains passed through an area thick with Red guerrillas.

The American mission to Yen-an was hardly established before Stilwell's Chungking staff began to proclaim loudly the superiority of the Communist regime over the Chungking government. Contents of secret reports from the Yen-an mission were freely discussed over Chungking dinner tables by Stilwell's staff. No secret was made of their admiration for the Communists who, they said, were really only

"agrarian reformers" and more like New Dealers than Communists. The hue and cry charging the Generalissimo with "hoarding lend-lease arms" to fight the Communists was raised with renewed vigor along with the claim that China's best troops were being used to blockade the Communists instead of fighting the Japanese. After Stilwell was removed, Wedemeyer conducted an exhaustive survey of all Chinese army equipment and reported that not a single American gun or bullet had gone to Chinese armies east of Yunnan with the exception of the 500 tons belatedly delivered to Kweilin and Liuchow.

The Generalissimo did keep a sizable army at Sian, the gateway to Communist territory, and they did maintain a patrol on the main communication lines to Yen-an. That they were also defending the Tungkwan Pass, one of the three vital gateways to West China, was conveniently ignored by Stilwell's staff. Late in 1944 many of these troops were withdrawn to bolster the sagging Salween offensive, and the Japanese promptly began an offensive aimed at Sian. Only a sudden and cold winter halted the Japanese short of their goal.

I do not think that Stilwell had any political motives in encouraging his Chungking staff to function as a public-relations bureau for the Yen-an Communists. It was of a piece with his earlier dalliance with the Kuomintang reactionaries. He was simply unconcerned with anything but his immediate objective. The Yen-an Communists shrewdly tickled Stilwell's vanity with many flattering appreciations of his military prowess and clinched him as an ally by shrewdly letting it be known that they would be delighted to have him command their armies. Stilwell never gave up his hopes of commanding the Chinese Red Armies. After the end of the Okinawa campaign in the spring of 1945 Stilwell proposed to land his Tenth Army on the Kiangsu coast above Shanghai, which was controlled by the Chinese Communists. His plan was to join forces with the Reds, arm them, and turn the combined forces south for an assault on Shanghai. That this would have encouraged the Chinese Communists to open rebellion against the Central Government should have been obvious even to Stilwell. It would also have bottled the Generalissimo up in Chungking as tightly as he ever was blockaded by the Japanese.

Since it was still official American policy in the summer of 1944 to support the Chungking government, it was a common joke that Stilwell's headquarters were developing a private foreign policy with John Davies (Stilwell's political adviser) as secretary of state.

During this period there was a strong group of left wingers in the Far Eastern division of the State Department who used Stilwell's

sympathy for the Chinese Communists and his violent antipathy to the Generalissimo as a lever to shift American policy in favor of the Communists. Had Stilwell been detained in his C.B.I. command their chances for success would have brightened.

This situation was so bad that when Wedemeyer arrived he found it necessary to make all American officers in China sign a formal statement saying they understood clearly their duty in China was to execute official American policy not to make it.

For incontrovertible proof of Stilwell's incredible behavior during his command in Asia, I recommend a thorough reading of his published diaries. Here he details with astonishing frankness his Chinese political intrigues; his pronounced sympathy for the Chinese Communists; and his total disregard of any military problems except the fighting in Burma and his struggle for command. It was no accident that these diaries were edited by Theodore H. White, the former *Time* and *Life* correspondent in China and an enthusiastic apologist for the Chinese Communists, who has recently written a series of articles for American newspapers describing what seems to him the remarkable progress of Eastern European countries that have fallen under the Communist yoke.

By midsummer of 1944 Stilwell was beginning to push hard again for supreme command of all Chinese armies. The ten-week siege of Myitkyina proved a temporary stumbling block because as long as the Japanese held that town not even Stilwell considered the Burma campaign a military success. During this same period my frantic pleas for supplies to fight in East China were getting strange treatment in Stilwell's headquarters. It became apparent that Stilwell did not wish any aid for East China—at least not just yet. Tom Hearn revealed Stilwell's attitude in his message to me, "Stilwell is working on a proposition to give this situation [East China] a real face losing and is loath to commit himself to any definite line of action now. Consequently we must hold off making any offers of help to ground troops until things precipitate a bit more." In other words Stilwell was apparently willing to withhold supplies from the Chinese troops fighting at Hengyang until the situation grew so desperate that the Generalissimo would have to trade Stilwell his long-sought supreme command for the arms and ammunition to fight the Japanese. It still seems incredible to me that Stilwell could have indulged in such sordid bargaining, but Hearn's language leaves little doubt as to his superior's intentions.

Shortly after Myitkyina fell, in early August, the campaign to get command for Stilwell was renewed. Toward this end a special mission



headed by Major General Patrick J. Hurley and Donald Nelson, head of the War Production Board, was sent to China to handle the delicate negotiations. Stilwell was promoted to full general to provide the rank required for the supreme command.

Stilwell accompanied the Hurley-Nelson mission to Chungking. With him went Dan Sultan with orders to keep Stilwell calmed down so that he would not upset the impending deal. The atmosphere in Chungking was so gloomy by then that Hurley and Nelson found little opposition to their aims. They found the Chinese willing to agree to almost anything that offered some promise of help. After seven bitter years of fighting the Japanese, with the final Allied victory already in sight, China was rocked back on its heels for what looked like the knockout punch. There was no question then but that China was teetering dangerously on the brink of military defeat and economic ruin. The Generalissimo considered that Stilwell's insistence on pouring the Sino-American resources into the Burma rathole was a major factor in China's crisis. Nevertheless, he was so desperate that he was now willing to accept Stilwell as supreme commander of all Chinese armies. The Generalissimo felt China's only hope lay in a rapidly expanded program of American military aid. To get that and save China he was even willing to swallow the bitter pill of Stilwell's command.

By mid-September negotiations were going so well it was considered safe to let Sultan return to India. Agreement on all major points, including Stilwell's command, had been reached and the tedious task of drawing up the documents formalizing the pact was under way. There no longer appeared to be any reason for Stilwell to attempt "the old threat, entreaty, expostulation, and bluff treatment." However, during this period Stilwell intimated to the Chinese that the Fourteenth Air Force might be withdrawn from China. This was at a time when the Fourteenth was all that stood between China and complete collapse. To give substance to the threat, Stilwell cut Fourteenth Air Force tonnage by 25 per cent for October, thus drastically reducing our operations in defense of Kweilin and Liuchow.

Allowing Sultan to leave Chungking proved to be a tactical error. Without his safety valve present, Stilwell was apparently stimulated by the obvious signs of Chinese weakness for a final joust with his old adversary, the Generalissimo. On September 19 Stilwell received a radio from President Roosevelt for delivery to the Generalissimo. One of the two or three Americans who have ever seen a copy of that message told me it sounded like a communication from Adolf Hitler to the puppet head of a conquered satellite state. In violent terms

Roosevelt blamed the Generalissimo for China's present plight and presented an ultimatum to appoint Stilwell as Chinese commander. The tone of the message was totally foreign to Roosevelt's usual approach to the Generalissimo. There were strong suspicions that Stilwell had actually written the message himself; sent it "eyes alone" to Washington; and there the War Department had persuaded Roosevelt to sign it and send it back to China.

When the Roosevelt message hit Chungking, Hurley and Nelson were working with T. V. Soong drafting the final minor details of the agreement on Stilwell's command. Hurley and Nelson urged Stilwell not to deliver the message. They believed that the violent tone of the radio would upset the applegate and serve no useful purpose, since the Generalissimo had already agreed to the terms demanded.

"We've already won the ball game," Hurley told Stilwell.

Stilwell agreed to hold the message. Hurley and Nelson went back to the Generalissimo's country villa at Huang Shan outside Chungking to continue work on the agreement.

On September 21 Stilwell appeared unexpectedly at Huang Shan and interrupted the conference. Meeting Hurley and Nelson in the Generalissimo's anteroom, Stilwell explained that he had been thinking about the message and had changed his mind. He now felt he had no authority to withhold a message from President Roosevelt to the Generalissimo. Striding past the astonished emissaries Stilwell confronted the Generalissimo with the Roosevelt message. The Generalissimo listened and let Stilwell depart in stony silence. Then he called in T. V. Soong and exploded.

The Generalissimo told Soong the Roosevelt message was a challenge to China's sovereignty. He was prepared to risk anything rather than surrender China's independence. Stilwell must go even if it meant the end of all American aid to China. On this score there could be no compromise.

Stilwell felt that he had scored a tremendous personal triumph. He was happy that his "hour of vengeance" had struck and composed an ode to celebrate the occasion. In this curious poem Stilwell admitted that he had presented the message to "break the Peanut's [Stilwell's designation for the Generalissimo] face."

Stilwell's delivery of the Roosevelt message actually killed forever his chance of getting supreme command in China. In his complete misunderstanding of Chinese psychology, Stilwell stupidly pushed the Generalissimo into a corner where he had no alternative but to lash out and fight back with all his power. Only those who had had ex-

tensive dealings with Stilwell could understand his peculiar tactics in this climactic encounter.

The Sino-American pact, once nearing signature, lapsed into deadlock over the Stilwell issue. For weeks no maneuvering was able to regain the lost momentum. When Stilwell realized that the Generalissimo would not back down, he frantically sought a compromise that might prevent the ax from falling on his own lean neck. One of Stilwell's Chinese military advisers, who was not aware of the Roosevelt ultimatum, suggested that perhaps Stilwell's dalliance with the Chinese Communists might be the root of the trouble. Stilwell promptly wrote a note to one of his bitterest Chinese opponents, General Ho Yin Chin, Chinese War Minister. In this note Stilwell admitted that he had planned to arm the Chinese Communists but promised to drop the plan in exchange for retaining his post in China. Stilwell had no authority to make such a promise, and he later violently denied the existence of the note to Ho. However the full text of the note appears on page 337 of Stilwell's published diaries with the notation that it was given to Ho in both Chinese and English versions.

Even this last ditch maneuver proved futile. The Generalissimo was still willing to accept an American over-all commander in China. It could be almost anybody but Stilwell. Agreement was quickly reached on bringing Al Wedemeyer up from Ceylon to take the post. On October 19 the War Department radioed Stilwell orders to leave China and return to the United States.

Stilwell departed leaving a legacy that is still costing both the United States and China heavily. During his regime he bled China white and squandered most of the American resources available in the C.B.I. Theater on a military campaign of minor value while the fundamental problem of preserving China as a base of military operations and a strong postwar ally was subverted to his personal quest for supreme command. Ironically, if Stilwell had attained his goal of supreme command, it would have almost certainly produced little change in the China situation, because he had never developed an effective technique for dealing with the Chinese. The fact that he would have been authorized to shout soldier's orders instead of threats over lend-lease would have made no fundamental difference in the results.

Such was Stilwell's stewardship of American policy in China. Behind it lay what I can only describe as a set of ingrained prejudices. These were Stilwell's beliefs that the entire Chinese leadership was worthless; that Chinese troops never had fought and never would

fight except under foreign leadership; that relations of mutual trust and respect were impossible with Chinese leaders; and that control of lend-lease supplies for China must be wielded as a club to beat Chinese leaders into yielding sovereignty of their country.

As long as Stilwell ruled the C.B.I. roost there was little challenge to the validity of his claims. There was only my testimony to contradict him, and military regulations easily muzzled me. With Wedemeyer's arrival in China, Stilwell's case collapsed completely. Wedemeyer assumed the China command in the midst of military disaster, severe political crisis, and a discouraging atmosphere of suspicion and fear. Such was the nature of Wedemeyer that within a few months he had cleared away the miasma of mistrust that hung over both Chinese and American camps, organized a military program for China, and won the personal confidence of the Generalissimo and other top Chinese leaders.

Wedemeyer is a man of great personal integrity and studied fairness in his dealings with others. He found it possible to deal effectively with the Generalissimo and other Chinese leaders on a frank yet dignified basis without rising to truculence or sinking to subservience. As a result he found his advice accepted, his plans carried out, and his opinions valued. Without the formal command over the Chinese armies that Stilwell always claimed was necessary for any action, Wedemeyer and his American assistants whipped twenty Chinese divisions into top shape, equipped them with American arms and supplies, and created the nucleus of a truly modern Chinese army. This was all done primarily with supplies that were air-lifted over the Hump, since the Stilwell Road provided little except trucks.

With the passing of Stilwell from the China scene it was possible to begin an effective joint Sino-American war effort even though it was just two years late. Wedemeyer continued to do an outstanding job with the Chinese armies until the end of the war. His postwar administration of American policy in China averted the first real threat of Communist military success in the vital industrial North and the lower Yangtze Valley. The suppression of Wedemeyer's postwar report on methods of implementing successfully American policies in China has deprived the American people of the opinions of a genuine expert on the subject. Had he continued as the ranking American officer in China I feel sure much of our present predicament in the Pacific would never have materialized.

TRYING to destroy airpower with ground forces alone is like trying to eliminate flies with a fly swatter. The effort is arduous and results negligible. It must have come as a distinct shock to the Japanese commanders in China to find that their six months' effort to shake us out of the strategic nests failed to keep our planes out of East China skies.

This East China campaign cost the Japanese six months of critical time, some 30,000 troops killed by air attacks alone, several hundred planes shot down, and countless trucks, river boats, pack horses, and tons of supplies destroyed. In return they got a narrow corridor running from the Yellow River to the Indo-China border and containing seven major Fourteenth Air Force fields plus three of our emergency landing strips.

Thanks to the mercurial elusiveness of properly employed airpower and the unfailing aid of the Chinese, the enemy failed to throw the weight of our airpower off his exposed back and was unable to harvest a single military dividend from the communications corridor obtained at such great cost. Before the end of the war the Japanese had taken eleven major American airfields in China and six satellite strips without interrupting the Fourteenth's operations for a single day or diminishing the intensity of our attacks. As long as we retained mastery of the air and Chinese coolies continued to build new airfields faster than the Japanese could capture them, Japanese foot soldiers could have marched until Doomsday without halting our air attacks. The only thing that could have put the Fourteenth out of business in China was counterairpower and the Japanese had failed to challenge us seriously in the air over China since the summer of 1943. As long as the Japanese remained inferior in the air, their vast and costly ground offensives were never able to reap the strategic harvest they sought. That is a lesson that no nation, hoping for survival in the international jungle, should ever forget.

The Japanese wasted little time after the fall of Liuchow in rolling on to join forces with their garrison in Indo-China and then sent a small force to probe along the Kwangsi-Kweichow railroad that led to West China. Meeting no opposition, this light force advanced as fast as horses could carry them, scaled the 4,000-foot heights to the Kweichow plateau and headed for Kweiyang, where the road lay open to both Kunming and Chungking. Appearance of the enemy horsemen on the Kweichow plateau sent shivers of panic through both Chinese and American headquarters. Chungking intelligence warned Lieutenant General Wedemeyer, who was then too fresh in China to make his own appraisal, that the Japanese would take Kunming. However during one of my first meetings with Wedemeyer I pointed out that the Japanese were unable to operate without supplies any better than we were. There was no evidence that these troops had any supply system supporting their drive. I drew a line on Wedemeyer's map at Hochih, back at the base of the Kweichow plateau, and predicted the Japanese would establish their permanent front there until forces were gathered for a real push into West China. Wedemeyer was then engaged in flying thousands of Chinese troops from Burma and North China to defend Kweiyang. When the Japanese cavalry encountered their first signs of Chinese resistance before Kweiyang, they were already shivering in the bitter blasts of early winter and still clad in their summer uniforms. Some intelligence sources said the winter uniforms scheduled for delivery to these forces via Canton had been sunk with a ship in the South China Sea. Without sufficient food, proper clothing, and no ammunition reserves this enemy column hastily turned tail and clambered down the Kweichow plateau to take up winter quarters at Hochih. During the winter, top Japanese commanders in China pressed Tokyo for permission to renew the West China drive and take both Kunming and Chungking. Tokyo refused to authorize this offensive solely because our air attacks on the North China railroads had then reduced their over-all capacity by 40 per cent, and pared locomotives below the bare minimums needed to carry raw materials to Japan. No locomotives could be spared to support a new offensive. This Japanese thrust, halted by properly applied airpower before it got under way, was a good example of how the earlier East China drive could have been stopped by a strong airlock on the Yangtze River and its ports.

While the Jap tide flowed and ebbed in Kweichow, the Fourteenth Air Force rose like a phoenix from the ashes of Liuchow and spread new wings over East China. Ever since the fall of Hengyang I had been engaged in maneuvering my forces to face the situation that now

confronted us. Instead of stretching out long fingers toward the China coast in a west-east alignment from Kunming to Suichwan the Fourteenth swung to a north-south axis to parallel the Japanese corridor and lines of communication. From new fields, stretching from Poseh in the south to Sian in the north, our planes were within easy range of every vital Japanese-operated railroad, waterway, and communications center. The 312th Fighter Wing, commanded by Russ Randall, held the northern flank based around Sian, Ankang, and Hanchung. The Chinese-American Composite Wing held the next sector from Lohokow to Chihkiang with "Casey" Vincent's old 68th Wing in a new set of fields a hundred miles east of Kunming and within range of the old Hengyang-Liuchow line. "Casey" was succeeded in command of the 68th by Colonel Clayton Classen, a friend of mine since the Maxwell Field days. In the south General Jack Kennedy's 69th Wing covered Indo-China and the southernmost provinces of China. From these bases the Fourteenth could strike along a great 2,300-mile arc from the Great Wall to deep into Indo-China. Results of this deployment were soon evident.

We faced three principal problems:

1. To hold out in East China until George Kenney's Far Eastern Air Forces could hit the China coast from the Philippines and blanket the South China Sea.
2. To smash the Japanese Air Force in China permanently and grind it into the mud of its China fields.
3. To paralyze Japanese communications in their newly won land corridor and rob it of all strategic value.

Holding the eastern air had top priority. In achieving this goal the Fourteenth engaged in one of the most fantastic air operations of the war. In their haste to slice through East China, the Japanese had neglected the cluster of bases around Suichwan that lay 250 miles east of the Hengyang-Liuchow line. Land communications with these fields were cut early in the campaign, and the enemy apparently regarded them as useless. Also omitted from the Japanese captures was Chihkiang about 100 miles due west of Hengyang.

After the fall of Liuchow, only 68th Wing headquarters and two of four fighter squadrons withdrew into West China as the Japanese expected. The rest "retreated" eastward toward the enemy and occupied the fields at Suichwan, Kanchow, and Namyung. Into these fields we threw a miniature air force complete from heavy bombers to fighters, transports, and photo planes. This East China Task Force operated for more than four months completely surrounded by Japa-

nese ground troops. The nearest enemy army was only 85 miles from the main field at Suichwan.

These aerial guerrillas were supplied entirely by air over a "little Hump" across the Japanese lines. Using Chihkiang as the springboard for this aerial supply line, transports commanded by Luke Williamson, shuttled across enemy territory day and night. Often they passed near the Japanese-occupied field at Hengyang flying in formations of ten to twelve planes. Not one Japanese fighter rose to challenge them. Only a few occasional puffs of flak marked the passage to the east.

Land communications east of Kunming broke down badly in the fall. Roads were clogged with refugees fleeing the Japs, including thousands who had trudged all summer long from as far as Changsha and Hengyang and were now freezing in ice and sleet on the Kweichow plateau. Truck service over the vital Kutsing-Kweiyang highway was overtaxed with Chinese troop movements for the defense of Kweiyang and the rice needed to feed them. As a result the bulk of Fourteenth Air Force supplies had to move east from Kunming by air, stretching the original Hump into a 1,000-mile air lift from India to Suichwan that cost three gallons of gas burned in transport for every two gallons delivered to Suichwan.

Shortly after Liuchow fell the Japanese made their first and last attempt to use our captured bases for major air operations. Some dozen bombers and thirty fighters were spotted on Hengyang airdrome one afternoon by our reconnaissance, apparently preparing for sustained air attacks on Chihkiang, the key to our air guerrilla operations behind the Japanese lines. The next morning, November 11, Chinese and American fighters from Chihkiang floored the Japs with a deftly timed one-two punch. First a wave of P-51's appeared over Hengyang shortly after dawn. They were met in the air by thirty Oscars, and a prolonged but indecisive fight followed with the Japs losing four planes and no American losses. Twenty minutes after the P-51's headed for home and the Japanese fighters had all landed for refueling, a swarm of Chinese-American Wing P-40's hit Hengyang without warning. Coming in just over the hilltops, the P-40's sprayed the airdrome with parafrag bombs and then came back to strafe the grounded Japs. It was the kind of haymaker the Japs were always striving to land on us but without success. Next day our photo plane picked up only wrecks at Hengyang. Never again did the Japs try to use the field for anything but a few transports slipping in at dusk and leaving at dawn the next day.

In December full weight of our new attack hit the Japs like a spring-



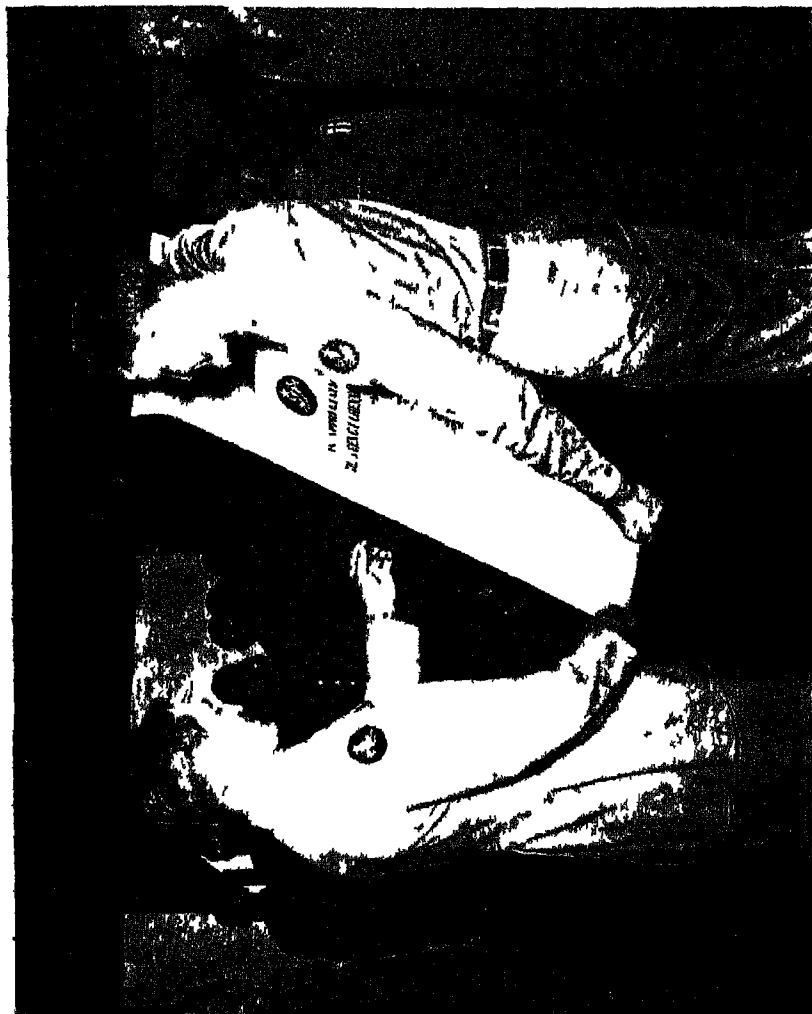
steel blackjack. At a time when the Fourteenth Air Force was supposed to be breathing its last, it inflicted the heaviest damage on the Japanese in three years of China operations.

Fighters from the East China pocket fields led off with a double-barreled attack on Hong Kong and Nanking to mar the Japanese anniversary celebrations of Pearl Harbor day (December 8) and give the enemy a concrete idea of how times had changed.

Lieutenant Colonel John "Pappy" Herbst, a gray-haired fighter pilot of 36, led the Nanking mission while Lieutenant Colonel Ed McComas sparked the assault on Hong Kong. Herbst's P-51's dive-bombed the rail ferries across the Yangtze at Nanking, a major Japanese supply bottleneck, shot down five out of twelve Tojos that challenged them in the air and then went into a huge Lufberry circle to strafe sixty Jap planes that failed to get off the three major Nanking airfields. They left twenty burning wrecks on the ground. At Hong Kong McComas' crew shot down four Oscars and sank a transport and three freighters in Victoria harbor. Going home, McComas spotted a Japanese destroyer entering the roadstead so he came back with a wingman in the afternoon to get it. They sank the destroyer with four 500-pound bombs.

Ten days later we lowered the boom on the great Japanese base at Hankow, key to the entire Japanese position in the interior of China. For six months I had been pleading with Stilwell and Arnold for a coordinated B-29-Fourteenth Air Force mission to destroy this spawning ground for Japanese military power. Not until Stilwell was ousted from his command in China and Al Wedemeyer succeeded him could I even get a hearing for my detailed plans of the mission. Wedemeyer heard my story, gave me his full support, and almost immediately secured Joint Chiefs of Staff's authority to use 100 B-29's against a China target of my selection. This was a graphic demonstration of what it meant to work with a superior's support instead of facing indifference or active opposition.

Appreciating my six-month effort to flatten Hankow, Wedemeyer gave me full responsibility for planning the mission. Curtis LeMay, who had come from the bomber war over Europe to succeed K. B. Wolfe in command of the Asia-based B-29's, came to my headquarters in Kunming to thrash out the details. Despite his ghastly experiences leading unescorted B-17 raids over Germany, LeMay still saw little need for fighter escort of his bombers. We also argued over the bombs and tactics to be used. I wanted the B-29's to carry a full load of incendiaries to burn out Hankow as the Japanese had burned out Chungking five years earlier. I also wanted the B-29's to bomb from below



Farewell scroll presented  
by men of Fourteenth  
Air Force headquarters to  
General Chennault as he  
relinquished his com-  
mand in August 1945



Lieut. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer adding an Oak Leaf Cluster to Gen. Chennault's Distinguished Service Medal at a farewell banquet given by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek in Chungking.

20,000 feet to insure accuracy and upset the enemy defense that would be set for them at higher altitudes. LeMay wanted to go in at high altitude and carry conventional high-explosive bombs. We finally compromised on four out of each five B-29's dropping an incendiary bomb load from above 20,000 feet. Each fifth plane would drop demolition bombs. The plan was to have the B-29's lead off with their fire bombs against the big warehouse district that stretched back from the docks and water front and contained all the enemy's surplus stores in central China. Everything the Fourteenth Air Force could get into the air was to follow an hour later in a mopping-up operation aimed at wiping out the Japanese airpower around Hankow. Our photo cover showed an average of 200 fighters and 50 bombers on Hankow's four major fields. Hankow was ideally located so that every unit of the Fourteenth except the 69th Wing, then engaged on the Salween, could reach it. It was the first and last time during the China war that the Fourteenth was able to concentrate virtually all its strength on a single target.

A force of 77 B-29's opened the attack on Hankow shortly before noon of December 18. They attacked in seven waves ten minutes apart. By the time the first 35 Superfortresses had unloaded their incendiaries, Hankow was swathed in a blanket of black smoke that completely obscured the city. Visibility was so bad by the time the final B-29 attacks were made that few bombs of the last four waves even hit inside the sprawling bulk of the three Wuhan cities. Japanese fighters failed to challenge the B-29's but were up in force when the Fourteenth appeared an hour after the Superfortresses had finished. Liberators bombed the main airfields outside the city from high altitude while B-25's went down low through the smoke to strew frag bombs over the satellite fields and pump cannon shells into hangars, gas storage tanks, and barracks. Smoke was so bad that the B-25's were flying on instruments until they broke into the clear only 200 feet above the river. Mustangs and Thunderbolts fought a pitched battle with Oscars and Tojos over the billowing smoke clouds. Flights of Chinese-American Wing P-40's patrolled over Japanese staging fields within a 100-mile radius of Hankow and shot down a dozen planes seeking refuge from the Hankow holocaust. Bag for the day was 64 Japanese planes without American loss. We put a total of 200 Fourteenth Air Force planes over Hankow and vicinity that fiery afternoon, the largest force we were ever able to muster on a single co-ordinated mission.

The raids of December 18 destroyed Hankow as a major base for the Japanese Army and Air Force in central China. Fires burned for three days, gutting the docks, warehouse areas, and large sections of the

foreign quarters. For a month afterward I kept the major strength of the Fourteenth over Hankow, using fighters from three wings and all our B-24's and B-25's. Fighters kept after enemy airpower while the bombers pin-pointed some arsenals and warehouses scattered outside the main burned areas and across the river in Wuchang. On the final Liberator mission against Hankow January 30, 1945, not a single enemy fighter rose to intercept. Our photo cover for that month showed an average of five fighters and no bombers on the Hankow fields. The backbone of enemy airpower in the vital Yangtze Valley was broken and the bulk of the supplies on which the Japanese armies in central China planned to live and fight through the spring and summer of 1945 were destroyed. Starvation crept down through East China from the blackened ruins of the Hankow warehouses like a slow paralysis, marking the beginning of the end for the Japanese armies in the corridor.

The December 18 attack of the Superforts was the first mass fire-bomb raid they attempted. LeMay was thoroughly impressed by the results of this weapon against an Asiatic city. When he moved on to command the entire B-29 attack on Japan from the Marianas, LeMay switched from high-altitude daylight attacks with high explosives to the devastating mass fire-bomb night raids that burned the guts out of Japan and brought the Japanese to their knees even before the atomic bombs were dropped.

During December the Fourteenth set a new record with 241 enemy aircraft destroyed and began severe attrition of rolling stock on the North China railroad systems. A single day's work in this territory destroyed 37 locomotives. Shipping attacks continued with 40,000 tons sunk. But our most important antishipping operation during December was the scouting done for Navy submarines over the South China Sea and Formosa Straits by Liberators based at Suichwan. A total of 159 enemy vessels was spotted and located for submarines in this area during the month. Many a sub commander radioed his thanks just prior to submerging before dawn for the locations furnished him for a good night's hunting. One night the submarine *Barb* sank four tankers originally spotted by a B-24. On another occasion a submarine attack drove two Japanese tankers aground off the China coast. The sub radioed their location to us before withdrawing for the safety of deeper water in daylight. Two B-24's took off immediately and located the ships. One was still aground, but the other was heading out to sea. Both ships were destroyed and the next day a Liberator on antishipping patrol para-

chuted a package of pictures of these blasted ships to the Navy with a note of thanks from me for the tip.

Phenomenal success of the Fourteenth during December was based on a number of new factors that had materially changed our situation since the end of the Stilwell regime. First and foremost we were working under a theater commander who understood our operations and was sympathetic to our problems. Second, we were no longer tied down to support Chinese ground armies in East China and the Salween and our 312th Fighter Wing in the north was freed from its fixed defense of Chengtu. For the first time since the C.A.T.F. days of 1942, American airpower in China regained its mobility. At last the Fourteenth was free to concentrate against the kind of targets where airpower pays significant dividends. Finally we received new planes and fresh pilots to replace the jaded veterans of the summer fighting. In the fall of 1944 after the fall of Liuchow the long-range P-51C's, which we had needed so desperately all during the summer, began to flow over the Hump in quantity. With them came replacement pilots, most of them champing at the bit and eager for combat after long service as flying-school instructors in the States.

Dominant note of our early winter operations was, of course, the miniature air force operating out of the Jap-surrounded pocket fields in East China. The enemy had counted on clearing the air over East China. The Japanese were still badly worried over an Allied landing somewhere on the China coast. They were working like beavers all along the coast from Hong Kong to Shanghai fortifying islands, building airfields, installing radar and coastal guns, and garrisoning every usable harbor, no matter how small or shallow. At that time the Fourteenth Air Force was also mapping the coast around Hangchow Bay in detail for a projected assault from the Pacific and the matter of a China landing was still a hot topic of Joint Chiefs of Staff sessions.

The presence of our pocket fields was a painful and costly reminder to the Japanese that East China skies had not been cleared and that they still had an unprotected back bared to our bombs and guns. Our old reliable Hsueh Yo had retreated with his battered armies into the pocket with our air force. It was his ragged soldiers that stood between these fields and the nearest Japs. The effectiveness of this combination during the previous summer's fighting had impressed the Japanese so much that they were unwilling to make a move toward our nearest pocket fields until seasonal bad weather in this area made air operations sporadic. Half a dozen times during December and early January

the Japanese started down the 85-mile road to Suichwan but turned back at the first signs of a joint air-ground operation against them.

These pocket fields were at their peak operations during the period when the battle of Leyte was reaching a victorious conclusion, the landings on Luzon were in preparation, and the Japanese were engaged in a major reorientation of their defenses. The South and East China Seas and the Formosa Straits were alive with Japanese shipping as the enemy frantically shuffled troops and materiel. The pocket fields were originally intended primarily to support our radar-equipped Liberators for antishipping operations. But the slim diet of supplies soon turned the pocket operations into a fighter show. We could operate 50 fighter sorties on the supplies required for two B-24 sweeps.

Liberators continued to operate out of Suichwan during the winter and found good hunting off Shanghai, in the Straits, and around Hong Kong, but it was the fighter squadrons that did the real damage. In three months the two Mustang squadrons in the pocket (74th and 118th) hit a quarter-million tons of enemy shipping, knocked out 512 enemy planes without loss of a single pilot in air combat, and bombed radar stations, coastal defenses, garrisons, and supply dumps from Shanghai to Hong Kong. Flying only 8 per cent of the Fourteenth's fighter missions they accounted for 60 per cent of all shipping losses inflicted by the Fourteenth during this period and 40 per cent of all damage to enemy planes.

Principal success for this operation was due to the superior leadership of "Pappy" Herbst and Ed McComas, who commanded the 74th and 118th respectively, and the intelligence work in this area of Major Paul Frillman. When the smoke cleared, Herbst had added 18 Jap planes to the Messerschmidt 109 he bagged over England, and McComas had run his string to 18 Japs including 5 shot down in a single fight. Herbst had operated his squadron at Kanchow since early August while McComas' squadron joined the fray at Suichwan in November.

Frillman had a radio-intelligence network through the coastal provinces that was superb. Every time a ship dropped anchor in Amoy harbor, the word flashed to Kanchow and a Mustang reception committee was dive-bombing an hour later. One day Frillman's swift radio intelligence enabled Mustangs to break up a Japanese naval staff meeting in an Amoy hotel with 500-pound bombs.

The supply situation was always grim. Fighter squadrons operated with less than half their normal ground personnel. Bombers had no ground crews at all. Air crews had to do all their own ground servicing

in addition to flying duties. Jap bombers came in nightly over Suichwan and Kanchow, disrupting the transport flow and sometimes blasting precious gas dumps. At one time Kanchow was down to five hundred gallons of gas with every drop on the field in the fighter tanks. Frillman and Herbst scouted around the pocket, locating Chinese gas dumps and organizing Chinese ground crews to move the gas to fields and strain every drop of this long-stored gas through chamois before it could be used safely. After the Hankow mission there was no gas at the pocket fields, and bombers returning there had to wait for Liberator tankers to arrive to refuel them for the flight back to West China. To run a big fighter sweep against Shanghai airdromes, gas had to be hoarded for a week. When Herbst's squadron arrived at Kanchow there were no bombs available so they dug up the bombs planted for runway demolition and dropped them on their first missions. The few trucks and jeeps at these fields were run on locally distilled pine-oil fuel to save hauling gas from Chihkiang.

By mid-January the battle for Luzon was under way; Philippine-based planes were bombing Formosa; and the Fourteenth Air Force made its first physical contact with the Pacific air forces. A Fourteenth Air Force Liberator on a sea search off the Indo-China coast met a Navy carrier air group sweeping in to attack Saigon. The Naval planes failed to recognize the Liberator. The last word we had from its crew was a radio message, "Being attacked by US Navy planes."

Operations out of the main pocket fields ended late in January with the coming of the regular thick weather and the Japanese. Again the Japanese were too late to do any real good. On January 12, while the Fourteenth was still operating from the pocket fields, Navy carriers began their initial sweeps off the China coast, striking Amoy, Hong Kong, and Hainan Island, and battering enemy shipping at sea. Intelligence furnished the Navy by Fourteenth Air Force Liberator scouts enabled this carrier force to catch and smash a large and heavily defended Japanese convoy moving through the South China Sea. Before the end of January George Kenney's planes from the Philippines joined the Fourteenth over the China coast and began regular attacks on our targets, thus providing an increased rain of American bombs over this vital area. From the end of February, sea searches by the Fourteenth, Far East Air Forces, and the Navy found no major Japanese shipping in the South China Sea, Formosa Straits, and Tonkin Gulf. The enemy's salty arteries had been slashed.

By mid-January the rapidly thickening weather had cut air operations to a sporadic pace and set the Japanese on the move toward



Suichwan. Again my frantic pleas for arms deliveries to Hsueh Yo failed. I had been trying since October to get small arms ammunition and a few automatic weapons and mortars to Hsueh's surrounded troops. Wedemeyer authorized delivery of medical supplies but not arms. The Chinese War Ministry was irked by Hsueh's outspoken comments on the fumbling of Chungking generals. Not until Hsueh sent special emissaries to make peace with the Generalissimo did the War Ministry approve supplies for his armies. Chungking approval came on February 23, just two weeks after the last of our main pocket fields had been taken by the Japanese.

Hsueh's armies were in terrible condition. During the summer and fall fighting, they had been whittled from 250,000 to 150,000 men and only 50,000 rifles. They were completely cut off from all sources of supply and had not received a single new bullet or rifle since the East China campaign began in May of 1944.

The bulk of our tactical units evacuated the pocket fields and returned to West China bases. Evacuation was again carried out under the worst possible weather conditions. Clouds sagged down below the mountaintops. Hail, ice, and 90-mile-an-hour winds buffeted Luke Williamson's transports as they shuttled from Chihkiang across the enemy lines. On the final night of evacuation three transports went down in that witches' broth of weather after a futile battle against ice and headwinds. One C-47 crew had been flying eight hours in a vain attempt to cover 300 ground miles before they bailed out.

A small ground crew of mechanics and radiomen retreated farther to the east and set up shop at Changting, 100 miles to the east of Kanchow. Changting continued to operate until the end of the war as a refueling stop for long-range fighter sweeps against Amoy, Shanghai, and Hong Kong; an emergency landing field for Navy and Far East Air Forces planes damaged on coastal missions; and a center of intelligence and pilot-rescue operations.

By mid-February the Japanese had taken Kanchow and Suichwan and driven Hsueh from his landing strip at Chenhsien into a tiny pocket where he was hard pressed and without communications. Undaunted, Hsueh set his troops to building another landing strip to receive the Fourteenth Air Force transports he expected. Hsueh's confidence in our ability to deliver his arms and his ability to defeat the enemy never wavered. Even before we delivered a single bullet or gun to his new strip, Hsueh launched an attack that retook Suichwan on the night of March 10-11 and held it for us until the end of the war. The attack on Suichwan was made by a force that had only 40 rounds

of ammunition per rifle and only one rifle for every two men. Of such stuff were the men of Hsueh Yo made. By the end of March our planes were again operating from Suichwan and a newly constructed field to the north—Yangkesu—that pinched the Japanese in the Hengyang area.

During the long ground campaign in East China the opposing air forces were occupied principally in support of their respective armies. The Japanese attempted little offensive air action. Our occasional strikes against their airpower were much like the casual slaps at a bothersome but not dangerous fly. With the end of the ground campaign and our belated replacements of both planes and pilots, that situation swiftly changed. We set out without further ado to eradicate Japanese airpower on the Asiatic mainland. Our purpose was first to clear the China skies for the ground offensives planned by Wedemeyer for the spring and summer of 1945 and secondly to drain Japanese air strength from the rapidly developing air war over Japan. Again our bases were well located for the task. Much of Japanese pilot training had been done in China, and all of these major training fields were within range of Mustangs operating from our new bases. Enemy air strength in China averaged about 1,200 planes, which would be badly needed over the home islands when the B-29 assaults accelerated.

American pilots had been fighting over China in the P-40 for three years. This plane had been badly outclassed in air combat ever since the summer of 1943. When the P-51C, powered by Packard's Merlin engine, arrived in China, we finally were equipped with planes far superior to anything the Japanese could put into the air in quantity. Their two new fighters, the Frank and Jack, had a performance roughly similar to the P-51, but they never appeared over China in sufficient quantities to be a real factor in the air war.

The P-51C was 150 miles per hour faster than the P-40 and had nearly double its range. Using tactics based on the new Mustangs' speed and range plus our pilots' aggressiveness the Fourteenth was able successfully to attack enemy targets containing from thirty to forty planes with formations of four to eight Mustangs. Approaches were made at treetop level to avoid enemy radar detection and make initial attacks with blinding speed. If enemy fighters were in the air the Mustangs had sufficient speed to withdraw safely and come back at altitude to fight.

Opposing the Mustangs during the winter of 1944-45, the Japanese used mostly improved Tojos and Oscars with a few Franks, Jacks, and liquid-cooled-engine Tonies. Japanese pilots were generally of poor quality. The earlier lack of a sound Japanese pilot-training program

was strongly evident by the end of 1944. Many of the pilots being sent into combat were so green their entire ability was concentrated on merely flying their planes without any ideas on how to fight. Enemy airmen were also suffering severely from supply problems: As our campaign progressed, more and more Japanese planes were caught on the ground without fuel to fly. Effects of critical tanker losses in the South China Sea were compounded by Fourteenth Air Force attacks on the Japanese internal transport system in China that made it increasingly difficult for the enemy to meet even his minimum subsistence needs.

Russ Randall's 312th Fighter Wing, with a mixed complement of Mustangs and Thunderbolts, exploited new targets in North China, where the enemy never expected air attacks. Major air centers at Tsinan, Tsingtao on the Shantung coast, Peiping, and Suchow were smashed with incredible results. At Peiping a row of transports was loading with staff officers when the Mustangs struck and bagged 40 planes. Three strikes at Tsingtao netted 64 enemy planes destroyed. Two attacks on Tsinan wrecked 64 with a single strike on Suchow getting 25 more. On nearly every one of these attacks the enemy was caught by complete surprise with only a small patrol in the air.

Operating from the eastern-pocket fields, Herbst and McComas led attacks that cleaned out enemy air strength at Canton, Hong Kong, and the Yangtze River fields from Hankow to Nanking. Herbst's treatment of enemy planes over Canton compared with the early C.A.T.F. victories over the same area. In three attacks Herbst's Mustangs shot down 38 enemy planes over the city. One dawn attack caught enemy pilots at breakfast in lighted barracks with mechanics warming up planes on the flight line. Chinese reported 40 pilots and 100 mechanics killed by strafing. In the final blow at Canton, Herbst led 16 Mustangs over the city at 15,000 feet and circled insultingly until the Japanese fighters took off and climbed to that altitude. The Mustangs sent 13 enemy fighters flaming into the city, scattered the rest and then went down on the deck to strafe the airfields until their ammunition was exhausted. Gas dumps were fired, planes burned, barracks and control towers wrecked, and the enemy so demoralized that for months afterward not even a recon plane was based on any of Canton's three major fields.

Nothing in all these attacks, however, could compare with our first strikes on Shanghai. The enemy had a network of five fields around the city and used them as major staging bases in air movements between the Asiatic mainland and Japan. The Japanese considered the Shanghai fields well beyond our fighter range. Their defenses were far from alert.

The Shanghai strikes were the valedictory over China of "Pappy" Herbst. This amazing fellow, officially grounded from all combat missions since early fall, had shot 11 Japanese planes out of the air on flights that were officially logged as "administrative" or "training" flights. "Pappy's" idea of a training flight was to take a new pilot on his wing to beat-up Amoy or Swatow airdromes, where the Japanese always kept a half-dozen fighters. "Pappy" once flew a Mustang from one of the pocket fields to Chihkiang for major repairs to its armament. Only three of the six machine guns would fire. On the way he ran into two flights of eight Oscars. "Pappy" shot down both Japanese formation leaders but was badly shot up by the remaining Japs. He finally found himself fighting with only one gun working and half blinded by blood flowing from deep cuts in his head caused by broken glass when enemy gunfire shattered his canopy. "Pappy" landed at Chihkiang to become the only pilot I know of who won a Silver Star and Purple Heart on an "administrative" flight. After surviving every kind of danger in China combat, "Pappy" was killed over San Diego on July 4, 1947, when his Lockheed P-80 jet-propelled fighter exploded.

"Pappy" planned the Shanghai strikes on the basis of his experience in the pocket fields. By using a staging field which was less than 100 miles from the big enemy air base at Nanchang, the Mustangs would have ample fuel to fight over Shanghai. Herbst was officially forbidden to fly combat missions, so he flew to Shanghai as an "observer" and shot down the only two enemy planes to get into the air. Lieutenant Colonel Charles Older, a veteran of the A.V.G., led the Shanghai strike.

Sixteen Mustangs, flying less than 200 feet above the ground all the way from Nancheng, streaked in over Shanghai on January 17 to catch the enemy by complete surprise. Mechanics were working on planes. Fighters were parked in neat rows before the hangars. Flak-gun positions were unmanned, and the guns were still swathed in their canvas covers. Three bombers fleeing a Superfortress strike on Formosa were circling for a landing when the Mustangs opened fire, sending the bombers crashing into the city. A total of 73 planes was burned on the ground as the Mustangs strafed until ammunition was exhausted. Not until the sixth or seventh pass did a few scattered flak guns open fire. Two fighters that managed to take off after the attack began were picked off by "observer" Herbst, circling at 5,000 feet like a hawk over a chicken yard. Not an American plane was damaged. Two days later another strike found the enemy better prepared. They lost 25 more planes with 4 Mustangs downed by flak. All the American pilots were rescued by the Chinese New Fourth Army.

In April when the American invasion of Okinawa was imminent, the Shanghai fields were bristling with bombers ready to support defense of this key island only 500 miles away. Chinese-American Wing fighters hit the Shanghai fields on April 1, the day the invasion began. The 23rd Fighter Group followed up two days later to bag a total of 30 bombers and cripple this force aimed at Okinawa. During the entire campaign not a single enemy plane was plotted from Shanghai to Okinawa.

Our record bag of 241 enemy planes for December rose to 334 in January, and then, as Japanese planes became scarcer in China skies, the score fell to only 47 in March. During April our planes encountered only three Japanese planes in the air—all of them obsolete dive bombers. From May 15 to July 1 Fourteenth Air Force fighters did not report sighting a single enemy plane in the air although they were ranging deep into Japanese territory from Manchuria to Indo-China. From November of 1944, when the Fourteenth was counted out of the fight by the Japanese, to May 15, 1945, we accounted for 1,634 enemy planes with a loss of only 16 American planes in air combat. The Japanese air force over China had been annihilated.

# 21.

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FINAL task of the Fourteenth Air Force was to clamp an air lock on the Japanese supply lines in China. Our aim was twofold. First, to prevent vital raw materials from flowing out of Asia to feed the war industry of Japan. Since sea communications with the outer empire had been severed, the Japanese were striving desperately to integrate an inner economic zone consisting of the home islands, China, and Manchuria. Any last-ditch defense of the Empire was based on this triangle. Except for the short water jump from the Korean port of Fusan across the Straits of Tsushima to Japan, this inner zone relied entirely on rail and river transportation. Keystone of these communications was the railroad network of North China. Over these railroads moved the coal, iron, and cotton for Japanese factories and the salt and rice to keep Japanese workers alive.

Second objective was to weaken the Japanese armies in the field so that they would lose their offensive capacity and be hard put to defend themselves against a large-scale Chinese ground offensive. At the beginning of 1945 there were still more than a million Japanese soldiers in China. These were distributed as follows: 350,000 in North China; 300,000 in the Thirteenth Army along the Yangtze Valley; 350,000 in the Sixth Army stretching from Hankow through the Hengyang-Liuchow line; and 100,000 around Canton. Whether these armies were planning to make a stand along the Yangtze or Yellow Rivers was not then certain. But they loomed as a formidable and troublesome force in any Japanese last-ditch defense plans. Wedemeyer was already putting the final touches on his Rashness plan for a big Chinese summer offensive. This plan called for training and equipping 25 Chinese divisions with American arms and ammunition and hurling them against the Japanese in the Liuchow area. Objective was a break-through to the China coast south of Canton where the American Navy could open and protect a supply port. After the port was opened the Chinese

offensive was to roll eastward against Canton. The Fourteenth Air Force role in these plans was to hammer Japanese supply lines to prevent food, arms, and gasoline from reaching these huge enemy armies in the field. If we were successful in throttling and slicing their supply arteries, the very size of these armies would begin to weigh against them.

During the winter of 1944-45 the Fourteenth Air Force began the kind of air pressure on the Japanese supply system that I had hoped to apply a year earlier when the enemy was gathering strength for his great spring offensive of 1944. Then, however, half our fighter strength was immobilized in fixed defense of the Chengtu B-29 bases and our other forces available for the task were eking out a bare existence with what was left after Stilwell's cuts of our Hump tonnage. The effect of our 1945 campaign exceeded even my expectations. Not until after the war, when enemy documents were available and key Japanese staff officers interrogated, did we learn how profound an influence our transport attacks had on Japanese strategic planning in China. We learned then that the Japanese had planned a large-scale summer offensive from the Kweilin-Liuchow area aimed at taking Kunming and Chungking.

Our long campaign against the Yangtze continued. Liberators methodically mined the river with contact, sonic, and magnetic mines during the winter. Fighter sweeps continually reported spotting ships sunk or burning in areas where there had been no air attacks for days, and we chalked them up to mines. By the beginning of 1945 the Japanese were afraid to use steel ships in the Yangtze beyond Nanking. Liberators then began intensive sowing of floating mines that were effective against the wooden vessels that the Japanese were forced to use.

Our main weight was thrown against the railroads.

For this task the entire strength of the Fourteenth Air Force was available from Sian to Posen to range a territory stretching from the Great Wall to Indo-China and from the deepest enemy penetration to the China coast. In this area—roughly equivalent to a territory in length from Montreal to Miami and in breadth from Washington, D. C., to Kansas City—not a single enemy train, truck, boat, mule-pack train, or marching soldier was safe from American air attack.

There was evidence that hunting would be good. Early in the spring of 1944, I had personally briefed eight of the Fourteenth's first Mustang pilots to use a far northern staging field and sweep the Pinghan Railroad (connecting Peiping with Hankow) as far north as Peiping. In

three days these Mustangs knocked out 50 locomotives and dive-bombed the roundhouses at Peiping without loss. Lack of gas forced the end of their activities.

To pilots flying the railroad missions it must have seemed like an endless and aimless pecking away at a vague objective. Only in headquarters did these missions assume the form of a campaign, planned with all the care of a chess game and striving to anticipate each enemy countermove long in advance. Every method conceivable was used to disrupt the railroad system. Because the North China rail network was closely interwoven and could be used in a variety of ways, we had to rely on the cumulative effect of our activities to produce slow paralysis rather than concentrating on a sharp breakdown in any single section. The Japanese juggled their equipment and routes well to stave off that final collapse. But without the airpower to challenge our planes their efforts were foredoomed to failure.

Fighters swept the tracks, strafing locomotives and rolling stock. B-25's with cannon shelled the track in out-of-the-way spots where the breaks were not reported until a wreck occurred. Since heaviest rail movements began after dark, these bomber sweeps aimed to break up the track at dusk insuring disruption of a night's heavy traffic. The Japanese remained puzzled by these track breaks until the end of the war. They thought they were the work of Chinese guerrillas, but many of them occurred in areas where there were no other signs of guerrilla activity. Low-level attacks were aimed at key bridges. Against bridges our tactics were continually revised in the light of experience to increase damage. From broadside attacks aimed at tracks and girders the bombers switched to narrow-angled passes aimed at the stone piers. Results showed more hits from the angled attacks and more than double the time required to repair damage. The bombers carried on a constant duel with Japanese engineers on the bridges. Careful tab was kept on each bridge under repair. Shortly before it was ready for use, another mission was dispatched to knock it down again. The key Yellow River bridge near Kaifeng was kept out of action 65 per cent of the time in 1945. Final attacks on it in the spring saw a 308th Bomb Group Liberator score a bull's-eye on the narrow span from 14,000 feet using a single 1,000-pound Azon bomb. The Azon bomb had tail fins that could be controlled during its descent by the bombardier to correct for drift and directional errors. It was one of the first true guided-missile attacks of the war.

During the spring of 1945 effectiveness of the new low-level attacks prompted heavy emphasis on bridge attacks. On the railroad south of



Hankow supplying armies in the Japanese corridor we averaged a dozen bridges continuously out of service during the spring. When the Japanese seized control of French Indo-China and began slaughtering French garrisons, we clamped an air lock on the capital of Hanoi. Nine key bridges leading to the city were knocked out in three days and kept out of action until the end of the war. This action reduced the flow of rice to the Japanese in Hanoi to a trickle, stimulated food riots among the Annamites, and made the Japanese position thoroughly uncomfortable.

The Indo-China incident provided a revealing picture of the clashing policies of the United States and Britain in the Orient. Soon after the Japanese struck, I sent Fourteenth Air Force intelligence officers into Indo-China to make contact with the French troops. Flying in tiny grasshopper planes, they landed in cleared jungle strips and had made arrangements for air drop of ammunition, medical supplies, and food to the retreating French when orders arrived from theater headquarters stating that no arms and ammunition would be provided to French troops under any circumstances. I was allowed to proceed with "normal" action against the Japanese in Indo-China provided it did not involve supplying French troops. The Fourteenth did the best it could to relieve pressure on the fleeing French by strafing and bombing attacks on Japanese columns. Eventually we were also allowed to evacuate French women and children by air. Wedemeyer's orders not to aid the French came directly from the War Department. Apparently it was American policy then that French Indo-China would become a mandated territory after the war and not be returned to the French. The American government was interested in seeing the French forcibly ejected from Indo-China so the problem of postwar separation from their colony would be easier. The British, on the other hand, were determined then to uphold the colonial system in the Orient and regarded a French defeat in Indo-China as injurious to their own imperial prestige. While American transports in China avoided Indo-China, the British flew aerial supply missions for the French all the way from Calcutta, dropping tommy guns, grenades, and mortars.

I carried out my orders to the letter but I did not relish the idea of leaving Frenchmen to be slaughtered in the jungle while I was forced officially to ignore their plight.

In April the Japanese made their last offensive moves in China. A small force captured our most advanced northern base at Lahoukow, which we used as the jumping-off spot for attacks on the northern railroad system. A much larger force of about 50,000 Japanese set out

about the same time to take Chihkiang. This base was a painful thorn protruding into the Japanese East China corridor. It was the spring-board for air attack on the supply lines that fed the enemy armies in the corridor, and it was also our only supply point for our far-eastern fields of Suichwan, Changting, and Kienow. Opposing the Japanese drive were ragged troops of the Sixth War Area, battered and worn by the battle of Changteh in 1943 and the 1944 summer campaign. Backing these ground troops were the 5th Fighter Group of the Chinese-American Wing and two C.A.C.W. B-25 bomb squadrons. These air units wrote the final chapter in the Fourteenth's long record of combat in support of Chinese troops. In a bitter six-week campaign this combination stalled the enemy drive well short of Chihkiang and then turned the enemy's retreat into a bloody rout. After the war Japanese commanders said C.A.C.W. air attacks had cut the mobility of their troops in half, forcing them to avoid daylight movements and advance and attack only at night. The battle for Chihkiang marked our first extensive use of napalm bombs—a fiendish concoction of jellied gasoline that seared men to a crisp within a hundred-yard radius and burned out the Japanese from the caves and trenches where they tried to hide by day. Wedemeyer gave our air units at Chihkiang full logistical support for the campaign even though it meant curtailing every other activity in China. C.A.C.W. had supplies to keep up a round-the-clock daily pressure on both the Japanese advance units and their supply lines. I sent the 308th on their last China mission to pulverize the main enemy supply center at Paoching. Follow-up attacks kept the Japanese field depots burning for three days. After the Paoching mission on May 12, Wedemeyer ordered the 308th out of China because they consumed too many supplies. That the Chinese-American Wing should have stopped the last Japanese attempt to take an airfield in China afforded me double satisfaction, for it provided indisputable evidence that the basic idea of this wing was sound and that Chinese and Americans could work and fight together effectively even under the most trying conditions. Although one of the Stilwell-trained Chinese armies was rushed to Chihkiang by air, it arrived too late to join the fighting. This final victory was won by the ragged and poorly equipped Chinese of the Sixth War Area, led by Chinese officers.

By March our transportation attacks were beginning to hurt. The Pinghan line was delivering only 25 per cent of minimum needs to the Hankow area while the Tsinpu line capacity had fallen to 60 per cent of the Nanking-Shanghai-area needs due to our attacks on other parts of the railroad net. Troop movements from Hankow to Peiping that

took a week in 1944 now required three months. The Sixth Tank Brigade, which left Hankow early in May, was still on the way to Peiping in October 1945 after the war was over. Yangtze River traffic was 60 per cent below normal between Hankow and Nanking. Since January of 1945 the Fourteenth had wrecked 2,500 locomotives and 5,000 cars, smashed 373 bridges, and destroyed 2,000 trucks.

Desertion of skilled railroad workers after bombings became so serious that the Japanese Army had to take over operation of all China railroads in April. Railroad repair capacity for the North China lines had been cut to 25 per cent of capacity by bombing of repair shops and desertion of workers.

By the end of March the Japanese armies in the corridor south of Hankow were receiving less than half the supplies they needed for bare subsistence. Lieutenant General Takahashi, commander of the Japanese Central China Expeditionary Force, said after the war that he anticipated getting only half of his armies' minimum needs during May because of our attacks.

However, due to the difficulty of assessing damage actually inflicted by attacks on the railroads at the time and the mounting pressure to accumulate supply stockpiles for the joint Sino-American summer offensive in East China, the Fourteenth supply allocations for transportation attacks were reduced materially. Not until after the war, when it was possible to interrogate Japanese commanders in China, did a true picture of the effectiveness of Fourteenth air attacks on Japanese transportation emerge. As a result of our reduced supply quotas the Japanese actually got 80 per cent of their needs during May and 70 per cent in June. However, Takahashi was making plans to abandon completely use of the Chinese railroads by September and to improvise other means of transport for his troops and their supplies.

By the end of May our air pressure produced the first open cracks in the Japanese lines. Without a shot fired by either side, the Japanese evacuated our former air base at Nanning and on May 16 began retreating toward Liuchow. At the same time the forces threatening West China withdrew to Liuchow, and a general Japanese movement to the north got under way. After the war Japanese commanders said this retreat was ordered because their armies south of Hankow could no longer be supplied. The Japanese high command decided to extricate them before the intensity of American air attacks made troop movements impossible. By the end of May there was a 100-mile gap in the once unbroken Japanese corridor. This was a full two months before

the Chinese ground offensive was scheduled to begin. Chinese troops moved cautiously into the vacuum left by the fleeing Japanese, but there was never more than patrol action between the two armies. The shadow of our wings was the only fear of the Japanese as they marched north. Tangible proof of this fear came early in June when the enemy retreating north from Canton preferred to fight their way through the Kan River Valley from Kanchow to the lower Yangtze Valley rather than run the gantlet of air attack up their hard-won corridor to Hankow.

Hunger was the spur that drove the enemy northward at a quickening pace. The enemy stripped the East China corridor like a plague of locusts. To keep alive, the Japanese slaughtered the Chinese water buffaloes, hogs, and chickens. By the time they left Liuchow in June they were eating dogs, seeds saved for next year's planting, and rats.

The retreating Japanese troops were harassed along every mile of their way. Fourteenth fighters and medium bombers combed the rivers and roads used by the withdrawing enemy. Whenever units were located, air attacks were directed against them day and night as long as an organized remnant could be located. Chinese intelligence reported that as a result of this aerial harassing "the North River [near Canton] ran red with enemy blood for a week" and again that the "Kan River [near Kanchow] is choked with dead Japanese bodies and wreckage of boats." So many boats were sunk in the West River between Nanning and Canton that navigation was blocked except for the smallest sampans. At Suichwan the remnants of a Japanese division made a wide detour around the airfield rather than tangle with Hsueh Yo's ragged battalion guarding the landing area.

Disease also helped thin the ranks of the retreating enemy. The hot weather of early summer in South China brings malaria, cholera, and typhoid. Undernourished and exhausted survivors of our air attacks fell easy prey to these maladies. So rapid was the Japanese retreat that for the first time in the China fighting the enemy left large numbers of unburied dead behind.

With the final ebbing of the Japanese tide in China came signs that my days as American Air Forces commander in China were also numbered. Attempts to oust me from my command were nothing new. The War Department had begun them early in 1942 before I even had an American command. These attempts continued in various forms ever since.

The situation that now confronted me had been brewing ever since Stilwell arrived in Washington smarting from his final Chinese defeat.

Three factors now combined to form a formidable opposition to my continued tenure.

1. Stilwell had persuaded George Marshall that I was primarily responsible for most of Stilwell's trouble with the Chinese, that I had failed miserably to defend East China, and that my personal integrity was questionable. Stilwell repeated in the highest Washington military circles his old canard that I had promised to hold East China with airpower alone and failed. He never mentioned his failure to provide the Fourteenth with the planes, pilots, gas, and bombs and the Chinese with the ammunition I told him were required for a successful defense of East China. In his new job as chief of the Army Ground Forces Stilwell never lacked distinguished audiences for his campaign of self-justification. Stilwell was also supported in his views on me by a clique of "old China hands" who had also been relieved of their posts in the C.B.I. by Al Wedemeyer.

2. The war in Burma had ended. Major General George Stratemeyer, who had strong support from Air Force Headquarters in Washington, had no further task in India or Burma. His ambitious staff logically fastened on China as the only Asiatic location that still promised some activity.

3. The war, for all practical purposes, was over in China. The Japanese were in full retreat all over South China. The Fourteenth was already running out of targets and even the Far East Air Force's strikes at China targets were often just punches at straw dummies. All that remained in China was to reap the fruits of victory.

By the time Wedemeyer went to Washington in February 1945 for planning conferences on the China offensive, I was *persona non grata* with Marshall. He told Wedemeyer that I was disloyal to Stilwell, that I had failed completely in East China, and that he had grave suspicions of my personal probity. He stated to Wedemeyer that he would never approve another promotion or decoration for me. I learned all this after Wedemeyer returned to China in April, carrying with him the plans that meant the end of my career in the Air Forces. Wedemeyer said he had no way of knowing whether Marshall was right or wrong about me, that he had observed nothing to support Marshall's contentions since he and I had worked together, but that Marshall left him no alternative but to ease me out. Wedemeyer was always honest and frank with me. I am confident that he would have given me his full support if he had been permitted to do so.

If Marshall's charges were true, I deserved a court-martial, and Marshall was lax in his duty for not ordering one. Twice I told Al

Wedemeyer that I would welcome this test. He persuaded me that because the entire affair was subterranean and unofficial my only course was to forget it.

The plan fobbed off on Wedemeyer was fantastic. Stratemeyer was to bring 2,000 members of his 2,400-man Calcutta headquarters to Chungking to set up Army Air Forces Headquarters, China Theater, and serve as air adviser to Wedemeyer. He would command a newly created empire consisting of the Tenth Air Force (to be moved from Burma), the Fourteenth, a China Air Service Command, a China Wing of Air Transport Command, and the Chinese Air Force. This last was particularly galling since the Generalissimo had twice previously offered me command of the Chinese Air Force. Both times the War Department refused to allow me to accept. I had served as chief of staff of the Chinese Air Force for two years with the approval of President Roosevelt.

This plan meant adding 23,500 additional Air Forces men to the already strained supply situation: 2,000 in Stratemeyer's headquarters, 18,000 in the Tenth Air Force, and 3,500 Air Service Command personnel. This made an additional burden of 11,000 Hump tons a month just to maintain these men in China—a Hump tonnage larger than the Fourteenth's total monthly supplies during the worst of the East China fighting. At the time the plan was proposed the Fourteenth alone was operating at only 80 per cent of capacity because of lack of supplies.

Real purpose of the plan was revealed in its details. The Fourteenth was to be shoved north of the Yangtze with headquarters at Chengtu. Approximately 20 per cent of the Hump tonnage reaching China then was delivered north of the Yangtze. All attempts adequately to supply the Chengtu area when occupied by B-29's had failed miserably. In addition the Fourteenth's crack fighter groups, the 23rd and 51st, the oldest veterans of China fighting, were to be transferred to the Tenth along with our two best B-25 squadrons. The Tenth was to operate south of the Yangtze where the bulk of the supplies were delivered and all of the fighting under the Rashness plan was scheduled. The plan was to let the Fourteenth die on the vine, subsisting on less than its familiar starvation diet with no important targets while the Tenth smashed to final victory with the Chinese ground offensive.

For purposes of window dressing the Fourteenth was labeled the "strategic" air force while the Tenth was to be "tactical." The only strategic air unit in China, the 308th Bomb Group had been removed

from the theater a month earlier. The Tenth and Fourteenth were to be equipped identically with B-25's and P-51's. I suggested to Stratemeyer that he have "strategic" painted on the Fourteenth Mustangs and Mitchells to distinguish them from the "tactical" planes of the Tenth. When it was suggested that a sizable Hump tonnage could be saved by moving the Tenth directly from Burma to Chengtu instead of shifting two air forces, the suggestion was rejected on the grounds that the Tenth was most familiar with air support of Chinese armies.

This entire plan was allegedly drawn up in Washington during the planning conferences on China. Actually it was written in Stratemeyer's Calcutta headquarters by officers, headed by Brigadier General Charles Bertody Stone III, none of whom had had a day's experience in China. It was rubber-stamped in Washington and on May 1 became China Theater policy in a general order establishing Stratemeyer's Chungking headquarters and moving the Tenth and Fourteenth.

The Fourteenth began the dreary move to Chengtu early in May. Truck headquarters was packed in shipping crates, truck convoys were already moving north, and the first echelons had arrived in Chengtu when we received a sudden order to suspend movement. Air Transport Command had announced to Wedemeyer that they would be unable to deliver the promised tonnages. Wedemeyer called a conference of statistical officers at Chungking to work out new allocations. Instead of a statistical officer, Stratemeyer sent his chief of staff, Stone. Stone tried to slip through Kunming unbeknownst to me by omitting his plane from operations and gas-receipt records. Naturally I learned of his transit and sent Brigadier General Albert Hegenberger, who had succeeded Glenn as my chief of staff, and Captain Joe Alsop to Chungking to match Stone.

The routine conference soon changed to a battle royal. The Fourteenth representatives demonstrated that the Stratemeyer plan was based on an absurd logistical foundation and could not possibly be executed with the supplies actually available. When the battle was joined, Hegenberger and Alsop, ably assisted by Lieutenant Frank Kravis, our statistical representative, uncovered evidence of the loosest sort of logistical planning. The gravest error had been committed in computing the cost of delivering supplies from the airlift terminals in western China to the Chinese ground armies in East China. The scene of the planned offensive for the summer of 1945 was some 1500 miles east of the major cluster of Hump terminals around Kunming. Only 20 per cent of the Hump tonnage had been allotted for delivery of these supplies over this 1500-mile stretch. Actual practice proved

that 50 per cent of Hump tonnage was consumed in this intra-China haul. I arrived for the final day of the conference and demonstrated that execution of the Stratemeyer plan would actually produce 50 per cent less air combat operation than the Fourteenth was then providing.

Wedemeyer was shocked. He called on his staff to refute our arguments. They sat silent. One general gruffly announced he was not concerned with logistics. Wedemeyer was thoroughly disgusted with his staff. I am unaware of what Wedemeyer said to them after that session, but he issued an immediate order suspending all movement of Air Forces troops and wrote Marshall that it was impossible to execute China air plan approved by Washington under current conditions.

After he had digested the results of the Chungking conferences, Wedemeyer requested Fourteenth headquarters to move to Chungking where it could also function as his air staff. Wedemeyer busied himself with finding quarters in Chungking for me and my staff. Wedemeyer also called on Colonel Howard Means and Captain Joe Alsop, both of the Fourteenth Air Force plans section, to rewrite the China Theater logistical tables.

On May 29 I received the following message from Wedemeyer indicating that the shift of Fourteenth headquarters to Chungking was still planned: "Permanent house for you and part of your staff will not be ready until about June 20. Available on June 1 is house complete with essential furniture, houseboys and cooks for either Hegenberger or yourself and approximately 12 officers. This can be used until your permanent house is ready."

Wedemeyer's reversal was a smashing victory for the Fourteenth. It left Stratemeyer in an embarrassing position. His defeat at Chungking became an open secret with the suspension of all movement orders. Stratemeyer's promotion to lieutenant general had been rushed through the Senate on the basis of his new command. He had three stars but no command to justify them. Arnold and Marshall might have to answer embarrassing questions from senators if the word got around. Stratemeyer asked Wedemeyer to accompany him to Manila, where General Arnold was inspecting the Far Eastern Air Force. Wedemeyer declined and suggested that Stratemeyer take me as China Theater air representative. Stratemeyer politely rejected that offer and finally flew to Manila alone to meet Arnold. Radiograms flashed between Manila and Washington. Stratemeyer sped back to Chungking with a letter from Arnold to Wedemeyer.

On June 20, the day my Chungking house was supposed to be ready, Wedemeyer called an extraordinary conference at Chengtu



of all American generals in China. It was strictly an "ears alone" affair. Aides and stenographers were barred. Only generals were admitted, and there was no record made of the proceedings. The proceedings were short and simple.

Wedemeyer read Arnold's special-delivery letter stating that it was the wish of Marshall and Arnold that reorganization of the China air forces be carried out as planned *regardless of the consequences*. That phrase burned in my memory. I could hardly believe that they would commit such a bald statement to paper. But there it was. They were determined to get rid of me at all costs. Wedemeyer made it clear he had no choice but to accede to Marshall and Arnold's "wishes." Neither had the power to issue orders to Wedemeyer, but he was a junior theater commander, owed his military eminence to Marshall, and could hardly openly defy him when the issue had been made so plain in Arnold's letter. Marshall, basing his stand on Stilwell's information, was determined to remove me from any responsible post in China.

I flew back to Kunming with a bitter, bitter taste in my mouth. I thought of all the grim years behind me and the first bright glimmerings of victory now visible on the horizon. I thought of all the thousands of American airmen who would now have to sit in China and India in boredom and idleness so that a general could wear three stars on his shoulders. I thought of Stratemyer's staff putting in their promotions all down the line, and it made me sick.

Wedemeyer courteously let me finish out my three years as China air-force commander. On July 6, two days after the third anniversary of the arrival of American Air Forces in China, the general order of May 1 was republished, setting up Stratemyer at Chungking and moving the Tenth and Fourteenth. Now the Fourteenth was to head-quarter at Peishiyi, less than 40 miles from Chungking where it would be under easy surveillance by the new Air Force Headquarters. On July 8, eight years to the day that I first offered my services to China, I wrote Wedemeyer requesting relief from active duty and retirement from the Army for the second time. I volunteered to remain on duty until Stratemyer was fully acquainted with his new problems.

My reasons for retirement were simple. I had made my break with the Army eight years before and returned to it only because of the war. I never had any intention of remaining in the service after the defeat of Japan. Arnold and Marshall had made it plain that one of the prime objects of their policy in China was to get rid of me "regardless of the consequences." In the new Fourteenth situation

at Peishiyi my air force was whittled to the normal size of a wing. In effect I would be replacing one of my own wing commanders who was doing an excellent job. There was absolutely no military justification for what had been done. Arnold had tacitly admitted this in his letter to Wedemeyer. The alleged augmentation of the air effort in China by these moves had already been proved to be pure sham at the Chungking conferences. Wedemeyer had bluntly rejected the shift when he realized its complete lack of military value. The decision to proceed with the plan had been shoved down his throat by Marshall and Arnold against his own better judgment. How completely hollow was this claim of "augmentation" of the air force in China was demonstrated when the move actually took place. The Tenth Air Force moved only a new headquarters to China and merely took over part of the Fourteenth's tactical units. Many Tenth Air Force planes were flown to the Philippines to reinforce the Far East Air Forces because there was no gas to fly them to China. The remainder along with thousands of officers and men sat in idleness in India for months. When the moves were completed, the China air force had really been augmented by two overstuffed headquarters, several troop-carrier squadrons, and not a single new combat unit.

My job in China, the defeat of the Japanese, had been finished when the enemy airfields were bare and the ground forces began their retreat to the north in mid-May. By July Liuchow had been evacuated and the only job left for an air force in China was harassing the retreat of the defeated enemy. I had a natural desire to remain at the head of my command until victory was formally acknowledged and to taste of triumph after my long years of battle against odds. Marshall and Arnold had made it quite plain that the Army held no future for me in China and that I would be barred from any significant participation in the victory. It was clearly time to go.

I gave ill health as my reason for retirement. I knew the Chinese would understand that as it is the traditional reason they use in similar situations. As long as the war lasted, I was unwilling to indulge my personal spleen in an outburst that would have certainly damaged what little remained of the American war effort in China.

Stratemeyer informed me he could do without my services after July 31. Stone was promoted to major general and named to succeed me in command of the Fourteenth. My old friend Hegenberger was also promoted to major general and took command of the Tenth after Davidson suffered a heart attack and returned to Washington.

Faint odors of the Chengtu conference drifted as far as Washington,

causing a brief furor. Numerous editorial writers, senators, and plain citizens demanded to know the real reasons for my retirement on the eve of victory. The War Department doled out its usual smooth sirup to the public.

Assistant Secretary of War Patterson announced that the changes were purely a China Theater matter, and the decision to supersede me had been made in the field by Wedemeyer and merely approved by Washington. This, of course, bore little resemblance to the facts, although I am sure Patterson did not know it. Patterson noted that Stratemeyer was "more capable of dealing with logistical problems of the larger forces in China." He also assured a Senate committee that there was nothing "personal" in the change of command. He said it was "purely a military matter."

While the victors of Chengtu were organizing their spoils, I set out on a farewell tour of China. Shortly before, I had flown across the Japanese lines to meet Hsueh Yo for the first time. He marched for two days to reach the air strip at Yangkesu where I landed. Hsueh was still trying to get enough arms to launch a counteroffensive against the Japanese then fleeing up the Kan River Valley. Again I had to tell him that all American arms were going to the new divisions in West China and there would be no aid for him. As I prepared to leave, Hsueh walked down the long hill with me from his temporary headquarters to my plane. There was so much we were both thinking and so little either of us could put into words. Before I climbed aboard the transport I gave Hsueh the old Sam Browne belt from my prewar Air Corps uniform. As he put it on, tears rolled down the leathery cheeks of that doughty warrior.

My farewell to Chungking was a day I shall never forget. On my arrival the Generalissimo asked me to stay with him in his country house. I declined, to spend my last night in China's wartime capital in the Fourteenth Air Force hostel among my officers and men. The next day the Generalissimo sent his personal car for me. People from villages miles away had trudged into Chungking to bid me farewell. The drab twisting streets were choked with nearly twice the city's normal population. The gray buildings and flimsy bamboo structures of this oft-rebuilt city blossomed out in Chinese and American flags, giant Flying Tigers, and Winston Churchill's famous V for victory.

It was impossible to drive the Generalissimo's car through the streets without injuring people. The chauffeur killed the engine and let the crowd push us through the narrow streets and up the city's steep hills. The air was foggy and acrid with the smoke of exploding

firecrackers. As far as I could see in either direction was a sea of dun-colored, bobbing, shouting Chinese faces.

The mob pushed my car into an open square in which many thousands of Chinese gathered under the sticky summer sky for official leave-taking. All morning and far into the afternoon they filed up on a wooden platform decorated with a Flying Tiger insignia and an arch of pine branches and flowers. Many brought precious gifts of jade, lacquerware, antiques, and paintings. More left scrolls and silken banners hand lettered and embroidered with the sentiments of the village or group they represented. All of them indulged in the unfamiliar Western custom of shaking my hand.

That evening at an official dinner the Generalissimo decorated me with China's highest decoration, the White Sun and Blue Sky, and Wedemeyer added a second Oak Leaf Cluster to my Distinguished Service Medal. Before the evening was over, the Generalissimo took me aside for a private conversation.

The Generalissimo was visibly sad. We chatted aimlessly for a while as he seemed to be groping for an opening. Finally he plunged in abruptly, "I am truly sorry for this. If Madame Chiang were here [she was in Brazil] she would be able to make things clearer. I hope you understand."

I did. I told the Generalissimo that I had no feeling against him or the Chinese people over what had happened and that I would be glad to consider coming back to China if I was ever needed again. Many wondered why the Generalissimo did not intervene to demand that the Chengtu deal be voided. Twice before he had intervened to spike deals for a new American air commander in China. This time, however, he had won his great victory over Stilwell, and at long last China was getting the type of military aid it really needed. The Generalissimo had an American chief of staff with whom he could work effectively and all was harmonious on the Sino-American front. To intervene with the American high command in my case would have jeopardized all these hard-won gains and the future of China itself. It would have been base of me indeed to have expected the Generalissimo to risk these things for my personal satisfaction. I was willing to fade out of the picture if it truly meant more genuine aid for China.

From Chungking I made the rounds of the main Fourteenth Air Force bases—Peishiyi, Sian, Chengtu, Luliang, and finally Kunming. In addition to bidding my tactical commanders and their men goodbye, I spoke to the Chinese of each area thanking them for their help

in making possible effective American air operations in China. I assured them that the final victory was already in sight and that the Japanese could not fight beyond Christmas. I had no information then about the atomic bomb, although it was obvious that Russia would be jumping in for a share of the spoils almost any day. I urged the Chinese to expend the same dogged effort they used in fighting the war to build up their country during the peace and above all to fight to the end against any form of government that sought to enslave the individual at the expense of the state.

Everywhere the Chinese crowds were immense. Chinese of all social strata mixed at these farewell meetings—soldiers, merchants, farmers, and coolies. In Sian a farmer asked Jerry Huang, who accompanied me on the trip, if it was true that Chen-au-duh (the Chinese translation of Chennault) was leaving China. Jerry assured him the news was true.

"Ai, ai," wailed the farmer. "That is truly sad because now the east ocean devils [Japanese] will come back."

As we returned to Kunming, Jerry told me, "No foreigner since Marco Polo has so endeared himself to the Chinese."

In Kunming, where the American Air Forces in China began, I took leave of my personal staff on August 8 and loaded my staff C-47 transport with a precious cargo of gifts from my farewell tour. After the war I presented this entire collection to Louisiana State University.

Hundreds of Yunnanese lined both sides of the take-off area as my C-47 rolled down the Kunming runway, shooting firecrackers to frighten devils out of my path. As Lieutenant Colonel "Tex" Carleton, a veteran of two China tours and my personal pilot, lifted the heavily loaded plane off the field I could see the sheer red face of Old Baldy gleaming in the sun across the lake. Far to the south a towering black thunderstorm was boiling up out of Burma. Below, the ripening green rice paddies of the Kunming Valley rolled by, and behind lay a record unsurpassed in the air annals of World War II—an air force that had grown from 250 men and 100 planes to 20,000 men and 1,000 planes, casting the shadow of its wings the length of the Asiatic continent.

In three years of operations it had lost 500 planes from all combat causes while destroying 2,600 enemy planes and probably destroying 1,500 more; had sunk and damaged 2,230,000 tons of enemy merchant shipping, 44 naval vessels, and 13,000 river boats under 100 tons; killed 66,700 enemy troops and knocked out 573 bridges.

Its best testimonial came from the man who suffered worst at our

hands—Lieutenant General Takahashi, commander of the Japanese forces in central China. After the war Takahashi said, "Considering all the difficulties my armies encountered in China, including guerrillas, ground armies, lack of supply, difficult terrain, non-co-operation of the Chinese, I judge the operations of the Fourteenth Air Force to have constituted between 60 per cent and 75 per cent of our effective opposition in China. Without the air force we could have gone anywhere we wished."

It was a record of which every man who wore the Flying Tiger shoulder patch can be proud.

News of the Japanese surrender reached me via our plane radio while flying over the Nile River Delta on the way from Tel Aviv to Athens.

I stopped in Rome for a brief audience with the Pope, called on General Clay in Berlin, and visited R.A.F. friends in London. Sir Charles Portal, then chief marshal of the R.A.F., asked me to stay over in England for several weeks to lecture R.A.F. officers on how the Fourteenth operated for so long on such a slim diet of supplies.

"If there is another war, we will have to do that sort of thing I am afraid," he added wryly.

I was in no mood to tarry in England, however, and set a record for C-47 westward crossings of the Atlantic. I had breakfast in England one morning, lunch in Iceland, dinner at Goose Bay, Labrador, and was at Mitchel Field, Long Island, at 9 A.M. the next morning.

I left China full of anger and disappointment. For eight long years my sole ambition was to defeat the Japanese, and now I was deprived of participating in that final victory. On V-J day it was my fondest hope to be aboard the battleship *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay and watch the Japanese formally acknowledge their defeat. A month later on October 10 (China's "Double Ten" Independence Day) I was reviewing a parade of Chinese in New York. Watching the rows and rows of healthy brown faces parade past me, I thought of the millions of underfed, malarial, and sickly faces I had seen in China. I thought of the grim war years behind and the long hard pull of peace ahead—the burned-out cities, the shattered bridges and twisted rails, and all the other scars of war that would require erasure. Originally I had planned to spend my retirement hunting and fishing on the Tensas River in Louisiana. But I knew then that I would go back to China and try to help these people rebuild their shattered land.

## 22.

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FORMAL retirement from the Army came for the second time in October of 1945. A brief lecture tour, a few weeks in the sun at Miami, fishing in Louisiana, and shortly after Christmas I was heading back toward San Francisco and the now well-beaten track across the Pacific.

Returning to China in January 1946, I retraced in a few weeks the course of my original three-year trek up the Yangtze River from Shanghai through Nanking and Hankow to Chungking. The scenes of devastation and famine I encountered were appalling even to a seasoned observer of China's sorrows. In the former Japanese-held corridor running south from Hankow every major city except Changsha had been completely destroyed. Half of Changsha was in ruins. Kweilin, Liuchow, Lingling, and Hengyang were blackened acres of rubble—scorched by the Chinese, pounded by our bombs, and then wrecked again by the Japanese as they retreated. All the smaller villages and towns had been burned to the ground.

This was not an ordinary famine caused by a single year's crop failure. This was permanent disaster with no relief in sight. The Japanese had stripped the countryside bare of food during their retreat. Now Chinese were stripping bark from trees and eating boiled weeds. Rice straw was considered a delicacy. Clay was sold in the markets, as its addition to these nutritionless messes gave them sufficient bulk to ease hunger pangs in Chinese stomachs. Not even stray dogs or rats prowled the ruined cities. All had long since been eaten by the starving people. Japanese slaughter of oxen and water buffalo for food and gobbling of surplus seed stores left Chinese farmers without the means to start a new crop. Families yoked themselves in buffalo harness and tried to drag heavy wooden plows and harrows through thick rice-paddy mud, but their half-starved bodies were not

equal to the task. All of this was in an area that normally produced surplus rice to feed half of China.

During my journey I talked with many of the Chinese leaders I had known in the war years. The Generalissimo and Madame Chiang were back in Nanking, where I had first met them eight years before.

Everywhere I went in China I heard the same story. Transportation was the most acute need. More than half of the prewar tonnage of river shipping had been sunk during the war. Timber to build new boats had to be imported. Without exports flowing out of China imports were impossible. Railroads were so badly wrecked that a return to normal operations would have required from three to five years of concentrated effort unhampered by civil war. Roads were in bad repair and there were few serviceable trucks. Air lift was pitifully small. There were only forty commercial transport planes in all China. The hundred and twenty transports given to the Chinese Air Force at the end of the war were too busy supplying Chinese armies in the field to be used for relief work.

What little transportation remained moved at the pace of a coolie's trot or oxen's plodding. Lack of any modern transportation had paralyzed trade and prevented effective relief operations. Economic life of China was skidding backward at a quickening pace. Only in a few coastal cities was there any trade. United Nations relief supplies were flowing across the Pacific into a bottleneck at Chinese ports. Vital goods were piled high in coastal warehouses unable to move inland, while millions of people in the interior died of disease and starvation.

I left Shanghai for the United States in May with a vivid idea of what I could contribute to China's most pressing problem. I planned to organize an emergency air lift of relief supplies into the interior. This would reverse my wartime operations by using former Japanese fields at Canton and Shanghai as base for missions into the network of former American air bases strung through the stricken areas of the interior. I was confident that only air transport could break the transportation bottleneck swiftly and effectively.

Back in the United States I found little enthusiasm for the project and the usual group of officials who were unwilling to consider any venture that did not follow a routine pattern.

In addition there was the familiar line of pessimism that I had been hearing since the day I landed in Shanghai in the spring of 1937. Much well-intentioned advice was offered me on why the project I proposed could not possibly succeed in the turbulent political and financial climate of postwar China. If I had listened to the perennial



pessimists on China in 1937, I might have taken an early boat for home. Their advice was no better in the summer of 1946 than it had been nine years earlier or than it is today. Several attractive commercial offers popped up, but I was then determined to push through the relief air line even though it meant beginning a new career as an air-line operator at the age of fifty-six with all of China's distinctive problems compounding the normal difficulties of starting an air line from scratch. Not until I talked with Fiorello La Guardia, then director-general of UNRRA, was there much hope for the project. He was willing to listen to my plans. As a former airman La Guardia saw the practicality of my proposals. Six months of wading through official red tape were required before final approval was given the air line by the Chinese Executive Yuan. Initial contracts were signed in October 1946.

The air line was originally organized under a contract between CNRRA, the Chinese equivalent of UNRRA, and the partnership formed by Whiting Willauer and myself.

The air line was called CNRRA Air Transport, which soon came to be known as C.A.T. The initial capital came from a \$2,000,000 (U.S.) loan from CNRRA. This loan covered the purchase of aircraft and other equipment which was security for the loan. It was a first charge on earnings. Operating capital was provided by private Chinese and American associates. CNRRA got top priority on all C.A.T. air lift at rates fixed by the contract. All capacity not required for CNRRA activities could be sold by C.A.T. commercially, at government-fixed rates. From proceeds of its commercial business C.A.T. was to pay back the CNRRA loan.

We bought fifteen C-46's and four C-47's from war surplus in Hawaii and Manila, hired crews in the States to repair and fly the planes to China, and set up headquarters in Shanghai. Flight personnel was a mixed bag of former A.V.G.'s, Fourteenth Air Force men, and Air Transport Command and Troop Carrier Squadron veterans who had had considerable experience with the C-46. Later we hired Marines doing transport duty in China when their enlistments expired. By the fall of 1948 C.A.T. had 1,100 employees scattered all over China, of whom 85 per cent were Chinese.

By the end of January 1947 the first relief cargo had flown west from Canton under the sign of a new and more docile Flying Tiger. By October C.A.T. was carrying a million ton-miles per month. In April of 1948 it hit the two-million ton-mile mark and in June we

flew four million ton-miles. During the first six months of 1948 C.A.T. operated twenty C-46's and two C-47's to roll up a total of 14,063,092 ton-miles. That is a record surpassed in all the world only by Slick Airways of Texas and American Airlines. Although C.A.T.'s business is principally cargo, it flew three thousand passengers during August 1948.

The difficulties we faced were enormous, but the problems were too familiar to be discouraging. All of the old problems of China air operations were still present: lack of housing for personnel, bad weather, lack of navigation and communication facilities, primitive maintenance equipment, small airfields, and even a war. Our metal repair shop in Canton still has to patch an occasional bullet hole in the dural skin of C.A.T. planes. Several times Russian fighters based at Dairen have intercepted and buzzed C.A.T. transports and on at least one occasion hit one of our C-46's with machine-gun fire. Photos taken by the C.A.T. pilot clearly identified the Russian fighter as a P-63 built by Bell Aircraft Corporation in Buffalo and lend-leased to Russia during the war.

Early operations were based on a heavy flow of relief supplies from Canton and Shanghai into the interior fields of Hengyang, Liuchow, Sian, Kunming, Lanchow, and Peiping. C.A.T. flew tons of seed, medicine, food, farm equipment, and banknotes into isolated areas. Government and relief officials and technicians were carried into their interior posts. When the fleet of four hundred trucks carrying rice to the starving population of the Siang River Valley threatened to break down through lack of tires and maintenance, C.A.T. rushed the tires and spare parts needed from Shanghai to Hengyang. Herds of cows and sheep were carried to rejuvenate livestock in the interior. About 70 per cent of these early operations were relief missions and about 30 per cent commercial business, largely on our back haul from delivering relief supplies. On these back hauls we carried ever increasing quantities of tung oil, hog bristles, raw cotton and wool, tobacco, silk, and tea. Typical of these operations was Yunnan. During the war Yunnan farmers were encouraged to boost their livestock production to feed the hordes of meat-eating Americans billeted there. After the war they had no market for their expanded livestock production. C.A.T. transports use their back haul to carry Yunnan hams and beef to a new market in Shanghai. Carrying oil machinery into Lanchow to expand the Kansu fields in West China, C.A.T. back-hauled delicious Kansu melons and delivered them to the Shanghai market twenty-four hours later. By the beginning of 1948 C.A.T. was

hauling a million dollars' worth of export goods to coastal ports every month.

The civil war between the Chinese government and Communists placed a heavier burden on C.A.T. When fighting in Shantung isolated the great cotton mills at Tientsin and Tsingtao from their raw cotton sources of Tsinan and Sian, C.A.T. stepped into the breach, flying raw cotton over the Communist lines to the factories and returning with finished cotton goods. More than 20,000 Chinese were kept working in mills that, except for C.A.T., would have had to close. In Shansi Province Governor Yen Hsi Shan has been besieged by Communists for two years. His capital city of Taiyuan has one of the largest concentrations of industry in West China with an arsenal, steel works, cement factory, and cotton mills, locally supplied with basic raw materials. C.A.T. has kept Taiyuan's industry going by flying in salt, food, and key items for the factories such as bleaching powder for the cement plant, alloys for the steel works, and raw cotton for the mills. On back hauls our transports carry finished goods to the coastal markets. Yen built a new field at Taiyuan to increase C.A.T. operations.

During the Communist siege of Mukden, C.A.T. was the principal link with the city for six months. We began the Mukden operation by evacuating 7,000 Chinese technicians who had been trying to rehabilitate Manchurian industry and would have been a costly loss to the government. C.A.T. flew in more than 12,000 tons of flour, medicine, money and carried out refugees and wounded soldiers.

There are recurrent rumors in the Chinese and American press that since my return to China I have been planning to organize another American Volunteer Group to fight the Communists for the Chinese government. Nothing could be farther from the truth. I have no interest in such a job. Under present conditions assistance to the Chinese Air Force could be carried out only as an official Sino-American project in the same manner that official American military missions have participated in the affairs of Greece and Turkey. This would be a job for a regular American Air Force general. I have no desire to remove the "retired" from my military title as a major general.

With C.A.T. I am making the best possible contribution to China's present needs. C.A.T. is helping to reclaim areas devastated by the war, rehabilitating industry by carrying the raw materials it needs, and boosting China's critical export volume by flying its best products from the interior to the coast.

This is the job that needs to be done now. After so many years of

experience with the airplane as a means of destruction, it is indeed a pleasure for me to use it for the constructive purposes by which it can build up a country instead of smashing it flat.

The Chinese seem to value C.A.T.'s contribution to their country highly. The government has renewed our operational contract and permitted C.A.T. to change its name to Civil Air Transport. Chinese from all over the interior have petitioned C.A.T. to extend service to their areas. Even the Moslems of far-off Sinkiang near the Siberian border have requested C.A.T. aid to transport five hundred tons of materials needed to begin an agricultural improvement program. There is no aviation gas in Sinkiang, but we are working on a solution to this logistical problem, which is little different from so many we licked during the war. In the near future I am certain C.A.T. will bring the Moslems of Sinkiang what they need from the ports. They will also be pleasantly surprised to find that C.A.T. can deliver some of their products to new markets. C.A.T. cargo capacity is booked solidly for six months in advance. Since the current demand for air lift is about ten times the total capacity of the three commercial air lines now operating in China, the future looks promising.

In less than two years C.A.T. has grown from an emergency air lift for relief supplies into an essential link in China's battered and over-taxed transportation system. Although relief operations are still as large as ever, C.A.T. activities have expanded to develop a commercial traffic that has kept the economic life of many a hinterland area running when it faced a breakdown because there was no transportation to furnish essential raw materials or to reach a profitable market with finished products. C.A.T. has again proved how a small group of Americans applying the methods of modern technology and the time-tested techniques for working with the Chinese can get so much out of so little in China.

The success of Civil Air Transport in its brief existence is proof in peace that the spirit and techniques of Sino-American wartime co-operation demonstrated by the American Volunteer Group can be carried on into the tremendous tasks of reconstruction that war-weary China faces. It is my fondest hope that the sign of the Flying Tiger will remain aloft just as long as it is needed and that it will always be remembered on both shores of the Pacific as the symbol of two great peoples working toward a common goal in war and peace.



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